

LAY-PREACHING  
INDEFENSIBLE 2  
ON  
SCRIPTURE PRINCIPLES;  
BEING  
REMARKS  
ON THE  
SACRED HISTORY OF THE APOSTLES,  
With a view to ascertain  
WHAT PRINCIPLES OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT  
ARE THEREIN CONTAINED;  
AND,  
WHO HAVE A RIGHT TO PREACH THE GOSPEL.

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BY  
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GLASGOW:  
PRINTED AND SOLD BY DAVID NIVEN,  
BOOKSELLER, TRONGATE.

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1800.

## ERRATA.

Page 17, erase Eph. ii. 20. as *there* quoted, and see the meaning of that passage, page 80. Note.

Page 43, line 12, erase these words, "or next to certain."  
See page 76. Note.





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N. B. *As the Author of these Remarks has been induced to write, from a conviction that it was his duty, so he has no present design of entering into farther controversy. At all events, every Anonymous performance will be deemed unworthy of any answer.*

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## P R E F A C E.

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**W**HEN the public mind is agitated about matters of Religion, it is necessary to have recourse to the Sacred Oracles, by which every point of controversy is to be determined.

THERE are few can be ignorant how much the subject of Lay-Preaching has, for some time past, occupied attention. Its principles have been industriously, and widely diffused among the inhabitants of this country. What will be their effect, Posterity will determine. But with respect to their tendency, it seems to be pernicious. While they will necessarily promote a superficial knowledge of Christianity, they obviously tend to foster that spirit, which, if carried to its height, will dissolve every tie by which Christian Societies have been held together; and prove an inlet to error and infidelity. With respect, however, to the motives of those who propagate such principles, the Author of these Remarks has no right to inquire. Only, if he may express his opinion, he believes that in many they are pure; and that the



conduct of such persons naturally arose from those loose ideas of the nature of Church Government, which had become fashionable in the world; and which not a few pious persons, amongst our strictest classes of Presbyterians, had begun to entertain.

WHEN the subject of Lay-Predching began of late to be discussed, many believed it to be a temporary breach of order, with the view of attaining ends which seemed important. This they more naturally believed, because that doctrine was known to be patronized by a Gentleman, who then *officially* acted under a solemn engagement to maintain the Discipline of the Church of Scotland; and because they did not in charity think, that he would have attempted to undermine any radical principle in the constitution of that Church, while he remained in her connection, or till he had judicially withdrawn his subscription from her Formula. Upon a closer review, however, of the sentiments which that professed Presbyterian then published, they will be found to terminate, not in a temporary dereliction of order, but in the adoption of a system entirely different. The doctrine there held forth plainly is, that *any* man thinking himself qualified to instruct others, may, without consulting the Church of which he professes himself a member, and in whose communion he seems willing to remain, take upon him the office of an Evangelist, or Itinerant Preacher of the Word. Were that doctrine supported, as is pretended, by the practice of the Apostolic Churches, then it is evident that the principles of Presbytery fall to the ground. It is hoped, however, that



it will appear from the following Remarks, that no such doctrine is contained in the New Testament; and that no instance can be produced from the history of the Apostles, of a self-authorized Teacher, or public Preacher of Christianity.

THE Author of these Remarks acknowledges obligations to those who have treated of the same subject before him. But as, upon a strict perusal of the Acts of the Apostles, he did not co-incide in opinion with them, in several important points, he ventures to tread upon ground, which, as far as respects the general argument, may have already been more ably defended.

A FAITHFUL delineation of the state of the Apostolic Churches, seems to be the best means for throwing light on the point in controversy.

SHOULD this humble Attempt to promote the peace of this country and the prosperity of the Church therein established, as well as the order of every Christian Society amongst us, be blessed with any measure of success; or should it excite any person of superior talents and information, to place any idea here suggested in a more favourable point of view, the Author will esteem any labour which he himself has bestowed upon this subject, to be amply rewarded.

*January, 1800.*



# REMARKS

ON

## SCRIPTURE HISTORY, &c.

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### SECTION I.

*State of the Christian Church before the day of Pentecost.*

THE book of the Acts of the Apostles contains a concise history of the first propagation of Christianity. In it the transactions of many days are often summed up in a single sentence. Writing to persons already acquainted with the order of the Church, as received from the Apostles, the Author employs general or indeterminate expressions, which the illiterate or careless reader will sometimes misunderstand. Such, however, was the superintending care of Providence, that the precise meaning of those expressions may, in every point of importance, be ascertained, by attending either to the spirit of the context, or to those fixed principles which are laid down in other parts of the New Testament.—To the propriety of this rule of interpretation, no thinking person can object; it shall be carefully attended to in the course of the following Remarks.

How many there were of the Jews who believed in Jesus as the Messiah, at the time of his crucifixion, the Gospel history does not enable us to ascertain. But we learn from the writings of Paul, that there were more than Five Hundred



to whom, on one occasion in Galilee, he shewed himself alive after his passion; and that the greatest part of those remained in life for many years thereafter<sup>a</sup>. On many, however, Jesus seems to have conferred this honour, for the support of their own faith; not that he designed to employ them as public witnesses of his resurrection. One thing is certain, that, whatever testimony they bore to that event in their *private* intercourse with men, only a few are said to have acted as ministers of the word.

THE number of disciples who waited at Jerusalem for the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit, does not seem to have exceeded an Hundred and Twenty<sup>b</sup>. Accordingly, on a certain interesting occasion, when a successor was to be chosen to Judas Iscariot, no more are said to have been assembled. At the same time it does not appear that any were prohibited to attend the consultations of the Apostles. On the contrary, it is probable, that the pious women with whom the Apostles were lodged, were permitted to behold every thing that was transacted. We may therefore believe, that as the other followers of our Lord were not officially called to take any part in the management of the affairs of his Church, so they attended to their proper occupations, and provided wherewith to supply the wants of their families.

WHEN we look back into the history of Christ, we learn that from among his disciples he early selected Twelve, to attend his own ministry, or to go forth themselves to preach the gospel. Them he denominated Apostles. Afterwards he sent forth Seventy others, whom he appointed to go two by two into the different cities through which he was to pass. To both he gave the power of working miracles<sup>c</sup>. The extent of their commission, however, seems to have been very limited. They had no authority but to proclaim the arrival

<sup>a</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 6.

<sup>b</sup> Acts i. 15.

<sup>c</sup> Matth. x. 1. Luke x. 17.



of the kingdom of heaven<sup>d</sup>; and, no doubt, to declare the works which they had seen their Master perform. With respect to the Seventy, at least, the design of their mission seems to have been, rather to excite attention to the ministry of Christ, than to explain the nature of the Gospel Dispensation, which they did as yet so imperfectly understand. But limited as this commission was, Jesus intimates that there were few among his disciples whom he could entrust with it. "The harvest is plenteous, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest<sup>e</sup>."

THE Seventy disciples, together with the Apostles, made up the majority of the Hundred and Twenty, whom we find to take a particular concern for the interests of the Church. By what means the deficiency was supplied, the Scriptures do not inform us. But what seems most probable is, that, as many Rulers among the Jews believed in Christ, and had, during his ministry on earth, privately corresponded with him<sup>f</sup>, so they now openly joined the society of his disciples. Among those were Nicodemus a teacher in Israel<sup>g</sup>, and Joseph of Arimathea, both of them, it appears, members of the supreme council of the Jews. As those men refused to assent to the deed of their countrymen in condemning Christ, so, immediately after his decease, they acted a more honourable part than the Apostles themselves<sup>h</sup>. We may believe, that others would imitate their example, especially when convinced of the resurrection of Jesus, they saw the success which the Gospel was likely, in opposition to persecution and death, to have in the world. If such was the case, it is as natural to think, that the Apostles would receive every pious Scribe or Ruler among the Jews; not only as members of their society, but as candidates for the future Ministry. As all the Jewish Rulers were *officially* teachers of the law<sup>i</sup>, so

<sup>d</sup> Matth. x. 7.

<sup>e</sup> Luke x. 2.

<sup>f</sup> John xii. 42.

<sup>g</sup> John iii. 10.

<sup>h</sup> John xix. 38, 39.

<sup>i</sup> Deut. xvii. 8.—13. and xxvii. 1.—9.

our Saviour had enjoined his disciples to submit to their authority <sup>k</sup>. Indeed, the design of Christ was not to abolish any part of the Jewish worship that was not purely ceremonial, but to graft the preaching of the gospel upon the reading of the law and the prophets <sup>l</sup>. Accordingly, the Christian converts among the Jews, never forsook the religious services of their country, till obliged to do it by persecution. It cannot therefore for a moment be supposed, that the Apostles would enjoin any Scribe who embraced the gospel, to desist from the discharge of his office in the Synagogue. On the contrary, they would naturally employ him as one, who might not only be better qualified to instruct the Christian converts, but who might convert the service of the Synagogue to the furtherance of the Gospel. Notwithstanding, it is remarkable, that none of the Hundred and Twenty disciples, who were met at Jerusalem, did immediately enter upon the work of the Christian Ministry. They all applied to themselves the command which was immediately given to the Apostles, <sup>m</sup> "to wait at Jerusalem till they received power from on high." In this they had the example of Christ himself to imitate: For though he was the Son of God, and though he could perform every miracle in proof of his Divine Mission, yet he did not enter upon his Public Ministry, till solemnly set apart to it by the descent of the Holy Ghost <sup>n</sup>.

WHILE those men waited for the out-pouring of the Spirit, they are said to have continued in the exercise of prayer with one another. Nothing seems to have been done by them, in a judicial capacity, but the election of an Apostle in the place of Judas Iscariot. "In those days," it is said, "Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said to them, &c." From his manner of address, we are apt to conclude, that he spake to all indiscriminately. But from other parts of the speech we learn, that his discourse was

<sup>k</sup> Matth. xxiii. 2, 3.    <sup>l</sup> Acts xv. 21. and xiii. 15. verse 46.    <sup>m</sup> Acts i. 4.  
<sup>n</sup> Matth. iii. 16, 17.    <sup>o</sup> Acts i. 15.—23.

more immediately directed to his fellow Apostles. When speaking to these, he says of the other persons present, "Wherefore of these men who have companied with us, (the Apostles) all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us (the Apostles) of his resurrection." On considering this part of the speech of Peter, it seems most probable, that they were the Apostles, who selected those on whom lots were to be cast, to fill up the deficiency in their number. Notwithstanding, the rest cheerfully acquiesced in their decision. The lot having fallen upon Matthias, he was numbered with the Eleven Apostles.

SUCH then were the persons who were to preach the Gospel to the world; and such was that subordination which subsisted among them. Such was that small cloud which was to overspread the face of the sky, and plentifully water the thirsty earth. But wonderful as the scheme may appear, we discover in it nothing that is visionary. On the contrary, every step is deliberately taken. Even the persons, who are to receive extraordinary gifts, must be men of prudence, as well as zeal. However long they had attended the ministry of Christ, or devoted themselves to the study of the Scriptures, they were called anew to consider the part which they had to perform; and, in the exercise of prayer and humility, to digest the important doctrines which they were to publish to mankind.



## SECTION II.

*Out-pouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost.—Its effect on the Apostles and others.—Several offices assigned to the Ministers of the Word.*

THE day of Pentecost was a festival observed by the Jews in commemoration of the promulgation of the Law from mount Sinai. It took place fifty days after the feast of the Passover, and, this year, co-incided with the first day of the week. No sooner did the light of that day begin to appear, than all the servants of Christ met with one consent, probably in an apartment of the temple, that they might offer their sacrifice of prayer to God<sup>a</sup>. The persons who did so, we have reason to think, were the same who are mentioned in the preceding chapter of the Acts. If the other followers of our Lord were arrived from Galilee, they are not said to have joined the society of the Apostles. Nor is it to be supposed that the accession of Four Hundred persons, to bear testimony to the truth of the Resurrection, would have been omitted by the Sacred Historian.

WHILE this *select* company were assembled, it is said, "There came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance<sup>b</sup>." This effusion of Divine gifts, it is evident, was much superior to that by which Ministers of the Gospel may now be prepared for the discharge of their duty, or by which their doctrine may produce its proper effects on those who hear it. With respect to

<sup>a</sup> Acts ii. 1.

<sup>b</sup> Acts ii. 2.—4.



the latter, it may be said, "that it cometh not with observation." It does, indeed, produce visible effects on their lives who have felt its sacred influence; but never is the communication of it attended with any outward miraculous sign.

ALREADY had the followers of our Lord received that more ordinary grace, which is necessary to understand and love the truth. When one of them professed his faith in the divinity of his Master, Jesus declared, that no other had revealed it to him, but his Father who is in heaven<sup>c</sup>. And when the Seventy who were sent forth returned to Christ, he rejoiced in spirit, because truth had been revealed to them which the wife of this world had been unable to understand<sup>d</sup>. Now, however, they received a much more enlarged communication of Divine gifts. Not only was every thing important in the life of Christ recalled to their remembrance<sup>e</sup>; but they were enabled to speak, with fluency, those languages which they had not formerly understood.

ACCORDINGLY, they immediately began to address the people. Their Discourses soon drew the attention of those pious strangers, who had taken up their residence at Jerusalem, and who, probably, had early repaired to the Temple to worship. Those would be more able, than the natives of Judea, to apprise the nature of the miracle now exhibited. It is said, that the multitude of them came together, and were astonished to hear a few illiterate Galileans speak in their several languages, the wonderful works of God. But while some of them began to question the truth of the miracle, Peter stood up with the Eleven, and spake to them in some language which they all seem to have understood<sup>f</sup>. He addresses himself, not only to those of them who were Jews by birth, but to those Proselytes who had embraced

<sup>c</sup> Matth. xvi. 17.    <sup>d</sup> Luke x. 21.    <sup>e</sup> John xiv. 26.    <sup>f</sup> Acts ii. 14.

the Jewish Religion \*. He explains the nature of the miracle which was performed in their hearing. He farther bears testimony to the Resurrection of Jesus, and promises to those who believed the gift of the Holy Ghost. "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." The result was, that a number of those devout strangers, having gladly received the word, were baptized.—And it appears that, through the other discourses of the Apostles, "there were added on the same day, Three Thousand souls †."

\* Not attending to the character of those here addressed, the Translators of our English Bible seem to have been at a loss how to render the introductory words of Peter, "Ye men of Judea, and all ye who dwell at Jerusalem." They ought to run, "Ye Jews, and all ye who dwell at Jerusalem." Paul, when he wishes to comprehend both Jews and Profelytes who were met in any synagogue, uses a similar mode of address, "Men of Israel, and ye who fear God." Acts xiii. 16. 26.

I may here remark, that the foreigners here mentioned, both Jews by extraction and others, are afterwards styled Hellenists or Grecians, in order to distinguish them from the natives of Judea. They had probably lost the native language of the country. John, in his Gospel, styles them Greeks, Chap. xii. 20. The same he does Chap. vii. 35, the sense of which is lost in our Version, "Will he go to the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles?" The meaning seems to be, "Will he go to the dispersion of the Greeks" (an Hebrew idiom meaning, Dispersed Greeks) and teach the Greeks." Peter here, from respect, denominates those of them Jews, who were so by extraction.

† Acts ii. 41. may be rendered, "Then they having gladly received his word were baptized; and there were added on the same day Three Thousand souls." We have no reason to think that those who now heard Peter were all the strangers at Jerusalem, but those of a more pious turn of mind who had early resorted to the Temple. They are said to be a "multitude" *πληθος*. But that term in Scripture is often applied to a numerous company. It is used by Luke when speaking of the Sanhedrim, Acts xxiii. 7. Even *εχλος* is affirmed of the Hundred and Twenty Disciples, Acts i. 15.

For a considerable time no notice is taken by Luke of the ministry of any but the Apostles. There is no doubt, however, that the rest were employed in baptizing the new converts, and in administering to them, in a manner more private, that instruction and admonition which was necessary to establish them in the faith of the Gospel. This may be deduced from other parts of the Sacred Record. As Paul himself did not in general baptize<sup>g</sup>, so he carried along with him other persons to whom he committed that office. In the same manner, when Peter had preached the word with success to Cornelius and his friends, he commanded them to be baptized by those who accompanied him<sup>h</sup>.

THE Apostles, being the principal witnesses of the Resurrection, seem to have entirely devoted themselves to the Ministry of the Word. As they did not even baptize their converts, so they did not take any concern in the temporal interests of the Church; but, though they received the donations which were given by pious persons, they seem always to have entrusted the distribution to the care of others<sup>i</sup>. They did, however, possess a superiority to every other Preacher of the Gospel. To them it belonged to direct the Ministry of the rest. Accordingly, these are said to have continued in the Doctrine of the Apostles<sup>k</sup>. The Church was "built on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone"<sup>l</sup>.

THE Apostles were not the only witnesses of the Resurrection. The same title is given to those who accompanied Peter to Cesarea, though they were not Apostles<sup>m</sup>. Indeed, it is next to certain that all, or the greater part of

<sup>g</sup> 1 Cor. i. 12—17.

<sup>h</sup> Acts x. 48.

<sup>i</sup> Acts vi. 2.

<sup>k</sup> Acts ii. 42.

<sup>l</sup> Eph. ii. 20. <sup>m</sup> Acts x. 39.



those who waited for the out-pouring of the Spirit at Jerusalem, had seen Jesus alive after his Passion. Such being the case, it is natural to believe, that an importance would be affixed to their Ministry superior to that of those who were afterwards ordained by the Apostles. To them others, while the Canon of Scripture remained unfinished, would naturally have recourse for information, concerning every important fact in the life of Christ. It is probable, that as the Apostles corresponded to the Heads of the several tribes of Israel, so the rest of the Hundred and Twenty corresponded to the Sanhedrim and other Teachers who officiated at Jerusalem—that Seventy of them, at least, were styled Elders by way of eminence—and that it was to their judgment, even a disputed point of Doctrine was referred, in common with the Apostles<sup>n</sup>.

To those persons, we may believe, was entrusted the money which was given for the benefit of the Church<sup>o</sup>. That trust they seem for a time to have managed for all the converts at Jerusalem, whether natives of Judea or strangers; but, that being found inconvenient, when the number of the Disciples increased, part of the trust, as far as respected strangers, was given to men chosen from among themselves<sup>p</sup>.

The character of those strangers, who were first converted to Christianity, deserves also a degree of attention. They belonged to every nation with which the Jews had any intercourse. But they seem to have taken up a fixed residence at Jerusalem<sup>q</sup>. None are said to be sojourners but those from Rome; which being the seat of Government, might have constant communication with the land of Judea. We are farther told, that they were devout men; but are not informed that any of them had formerly embraced the Doc-

<sup>n</sup> Acts xv. 2. <sup>o</sup> Acts vi. 2, and xi. 30. <sup>p</sup> Acts vi. 3. <sup>q</sup> Acts ii. 5—11.



trine of our Saviour. Nay; Peter charges the death of Jesus upon them in common with the other Jews<sup>r</sup>. As many of them were Jews by extraction, so the rest had submitted to the rites of the ceremonial Law: for had they been only Profelytes of the gate, the Jews would have refused to maintain with them any familiar intercourse<sup>a</sup>. We may therefore believe, that, agreeably to their character as devout men, they had, before their conversion, not only regularly attended to the ordinances of the Jewish worship, but devoted much of their time to the study of the Holy Scriptures. At the same time, as Peter had led them to expect the gift of the Holy Ghost, so we cannot doubt that many became partakers of the same. \* Notwithstanding, they continue at Jerusalem, and subject their Ministry to the direction of the Apostles<sup>b</sup>.

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### SECTION III.

*Early progress of Christianity—Favourable circumstances under which it was propagated—Second effusion of the Spirit—No authority thence to be deduced for all to preach the Gospel.*

WE have already considered the number of those who were at first employed in preaching the Gospel. But besides no hint is given of any receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, but those pious strangers who resided at Jerusalem.

<sup>r</sup> Acts ii. 23.

<sup>a</sup> Acts xi. 3.

<sup>b</sup> Acts ii. 42.

\* The promise of which the Apostle speaks is obviously that which, in the course of his speech, he had quoted from Joel, respecting the miraculous effusion of the Holy Spirit. This they would early receive, as a token that it would be conferred on those who were *afar off*.

Many of these, we have every reason to think, would, either at their conversion to Christianity, or soon after, be entrusted with a share of Ministerial work.

ACCOMPANIED with heavenly influence, the Gospel, in their hands, had remarkable success. To be convinced of this, nothing is necessary but that we consider the following periods, which are marked in the Sacred History

I. ON the day of Pentecost, besides those from other nations, there were converted, of the natives of Judea, about Three Thousand souls <sup>c</sup>.

II. FOR an indefinite time thereafter, were added to the Church *daily* such as should be saved <sup>d</sup>. If these bore any proportion to the former, they must have amounted to several Thousands.

III. NEXT we read, "Many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the *men* was about Five Thousand <sup>e</sup>." It is possible that this might be the sum of all the former conversions. But as this is uncertain, so let it be remarked, that the term here rendered *men* is never in the Greek language applied to persons in general; but to those only of a *certain sex*, who are arrived at the years of understanding. \* If, therefore, there was any proportion

<sup>c</sup> Acts ii. 41.    <sup>d</sup> Acts ii. 47.    <sup>e</sup> Acts iv. 4.

\* *των ανδρων*. *Ανδρ* differs as much in signification from *ανθρωπος*, in Greek, as *Vir* does from *Homo*, in Latin. To this difference the Sacred Writers always attend. A remarkable instance of it we have, 1 Tim. ii. 1,—9. When speaking of our race in general, Paul says, "I entreat that prayers be made for all men" *ανθρωπων*—"who will have all men to be saved," *ανθρωπων*—"the Mediator between God and men," *ανθρωπων*. But when the Apostle comes to speak of the duties proper for the different sexes, he says, "I will that men pray every where," *Ατους ανδρας*. "In like manner that women, &c." In the 8th, and following verses of the chapter, he seems to speak of the duties of persons employed in a family capacity.

of women and younger persons, the number of souls, now connected with the Church, could not, in any case, fall much short of Fifteen Thousand.

IV. AFTER the death of Ananias and Sapphira, we are told that, "there were added to the Lord multitudes of both men and women <sup>f</sup>." And,

V. AFTER the election of the Deacons we read, "that the word of the Lord increased, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem; and a great number of the priests were obedient to the faith <sup>g</sup>."

THE numbers which have been now mentioned, are expressly distinguished from those who came from neighbouring villages <sup>h</sup>.

FROM the above statement, then, it will appear, that after the last period which has been marked, the number of souls connected with the church at Jerusalem, must, on the lowest calculation, have exceeded Twenty Thousand. The Apostles had filled that city with their doctrine <sup>i</sup>. Agreeable to this, is the remark which was made to Paul, many years after the time of which we now speak, "Brother, thou seest how many myriads <sup>\*</sup> of the Jews are obedient to the faith <sup>k</sup>."

It will appear remarkable, that Christianity should have flourished in the midst of her enemies. But as her cause

<sup>f</sup> Acts v. 14.

<sup>g</sup> Acts vi. 7.

<sup>h</sup> Acts v. 16.

<sup>i</sup> Acts v. 28.

<sup>k</sup> Acts xxi. 20.

\* It is in our Bible "Thousands," the word Myriad, for Ten Thousand, when that Version was made, being not introduced into our Language. We cannot think that the Apostle here meant to exaggerate. On the contrary, the Church seems to have kept an accurate register of the number of her converts; and this Paul now was, probably, allowed to inspect.



was supported by the most ample evidence, and was accompanied with heavenly power, so she began her progress under the most happy external circumstances. The greater part of the Jewish Rulers, indeed, having procured our Saviour to be crucified, retained equal enmity against his Religion. But it is to be remembered, that the power of the sword was now taken from them. They were, indeed, permitted to try causes of a religious nature, and inflict smaller punishments; but they could put no man to death, without the consent of the Roman Governor<sup>l</sup>. Such being the case, they could scarcely raise any thing like a general persecution against the Christians. They might raise partial insurrections in the city, which might be so far connived at by the Romans; they might imprison individuals and beat them with rods: But it is evident, that even from those acts of outrage they would begin to desist, when they found that they could carry their malice no farther. At the same time, the Romans were a people who, while they restrained injustice in their several provinces, do not, at this time, seem to have interfered in Religious disputes<sup>m</sup>. How far they were disposed to favour the Jews, in their designs against Christianity, we learn from the example of Herod. "He killed James, and because he saw that it pleased the Jews, he took Peter also"<sup>n</sup>. Another Governor of Judea, even rescued Paul, out of the hands of the Sanhedrim<sup>o</sup>. We cannot sufficiently admire the wisdom of Providence, in so arranging the affairs of men, as to render them subservient to the success of the Gospel. Had Christianity begun to be preached, in the time of Herod the Great, what bloodshed might we not have expected? The witnesses of the Resurrection of Jesus being early dispersed, from the place where that event was accomplished, their testimony must have lost much of its force,

<sup>l</sup> John xviii. 31.

<sup>m</sup> Acts xviii. 14, 15.

<sup>n</sup> Acts xii. 2, 3.

<sup>o</sup> Acts xxiii. 10. See also Chap. xxi. 31. 32.

at this distant period. God, however, foresees the end from the beginning. It was "when the fulness of time was come, that He sent forth his Son" to save a perishing world <sup>p</sup>.

NOTWITHSTANDING, it was not without a degree of molestation, Christianity was allowed to carry on her triumphs at Jerusalem. The malice of the Jews was at the beginning solely directed against the Apostles. The Ministrations of the rest, being probably at first more private, did not so much excite their attention.—First, they are said to have imprisoned Peter and John; but finding no charge against them, which might authorize them to inflict upon them a punishment of *any* kind, they *threatened* them, and allowed them to depart <sup>q</sup>. The next persecution was raised against all the Twelve Apostles. Having been imprisoned by the Jews, they were, during night, in a miraculous manner released. But next day, being brought before the Sanhedrim, and refusing to obey them, by not preaching in the name of Jesus, the Jews began to consult how they might put them to death; when, through the advice of Gamaliel, they relinquished their purpose, and contented themselves with beating them with rods <sup>r</sup>. After this the Apostles do not seem, for a considerable time, to have been molested.—Some strangers, however, having by false witnesses proved a charge against Stephen, he was, in a riotous manner, stoned to death <sup>a</sup>. The nature of the persecution, which thereupon arose against the Church, shall be afterwards considered.

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AFTER the Apostles Peter and John had been threatened by the Jewish Council, an occurrence took place which

<sup>p</sup> Gal. iv. 4.

<sup>q</sup> Acts iv. 21.

<sup>r</sup> Acts v. 33, 40.

<sup>a</sup> Acts vii. 54, 60.

merits particular attention. It is said that, when they came to their own company, and had joined them in prayer to God, "the place was shaken where they were assembled; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness<sup>b</sup>." That the Apostles with a select company often met, to deliberate about the affairs of the Church, is what we have already seen take place, before, and on the day of Pentecost. We farther read, that as the Apostles sometimes met alone, so often in presence of the Elders; and that on those occasions others were not required to attend<sup>c</sup>. When, therefore, Peter and John are said to have come to their own company, (or, as it is in the Greek text, "to their own)," the natural meaning has been understood to be, that they came either to the rest of the Apostles, or to them as met with the other Ministers of the word. Indeed, it was scarcely possible that all the converts at Jerusalem could, now, meet in one Assembly. Nor, probably, was it ever at all supposed by the inspired Historian. An advocate for Lay-Predaching, however, has insinuated that this effusion of the Holy Spirit, as well as that on the day of Pentecost, extended to all the members of the Church. \* If so, in

<sup>b</sup> Acts iv. 31.

<sup>c</sup> Acts ix. 27. and Chap. xxi. 18.

\* See Missionary Magazine, Vol. III. No. XXI. Pages 69 and 70, published at Edinburgh, Feb. 1798. As I will have occasion to allude to this work, it is certainly proper to state what the Editors have, I believe, declared, that it was never published under the authority of any Missionary Society in this Country, but by a certain individual or more who were connected with them. Those Societies allow no Missionary to go forth to Heathen lands, as from them, or with their approbation, without examination by Ministers of the Gospel and other Managers. The Glasgow Missionary Society, in particular, prescribe a course of special study to those who offer themselves as Catechists for the Heathen. But how far that work, bearing a name so popular, and published as it was under the inspection of a Minister then in connection with the Church of Scotland, may have, eventually, or designedly, prepared the way for a new Sect in the land, I acknowledge I have not information sufficient to determine.



vain would he adduce any thing, in the conduct of the Church at Jerusalem, as an argument for Lay-Preaching; all the members of that Church being more or less partakers of extraordinary gifts. The nature of the gifts conferred, we learn from the previous prayer of the Church, in answer to which they seem to have been given. "Grant," said they, "unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, by stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus<sup>d</sup>." Now, if by the servants of God, for whom those gifts were prayed for, we are to understand the whole Church, or those of them who were arrived at the age of manhood, we must now have had, at least, Five Thousand persons preaching in the streets of Jerusalem: for, surely, a small part of the day might have sufficed, for teaching the women and children. —Let not the reader imagine that this is to stretch the words of Luke beyond their natural meaning. Whoever they were, who were now filled with the Holy Ghost, they are said "to have spoken the word with boldness." At the same time, that seems to refer, not to instruction administered in families or smaller companies, but to that public exercise of gifts which might expose to the malice of the Jewish Rulers.

HAD there been such a general participation of extraordinary gifts, as has been supposed, it would have rather obstructed than promoted the cause of Christianity. By the number of Preachers who appeared, the attention of men would have been diverted from the witnesses of the Resurrection. The people would have been more desirous to hear every new display of talents that was exhibited, than to inquire into the truth and importance of the Gospel. But, otherwise, an obvious question occurs, Why do

<sup>d</sup> Acts iv. 29, 30.

the Apostles still confine their labours to Jerusalem, which was already so plentifully supplied with Preachers, and not turn their attention to other parts of Judea? Why, especially, do the pious strangers, who still remained with them, not begin to remember the lands which gave them birth? If they had courage to preach at Jerusalem, they had little compassion for the inhabitants of other countries, who were perishing for lack of knowledge!—Can we consider, without regret, the absurd interpretations which have been put upon Scripture! How often has Christianity been held up to ridicule! How many who would not join her enemies, in encircling her temples with a crown of thorns, have so far conspired with those, as to disfigure her person with a gorgeous robe! Is it not the duty of every friend of truth and of man, to restore to her that simple but comely attire, with which she had at first adorned herself!

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#### SECTION IV.

*Farther remarks on the number of those who preached the Gospel at Jerusalem—Character of the Seven who were entrusted with the distribution of Charity for the behoof of the Grecian converts.*

CHRISTIANITY, in her progress through the world, proceeds in a manner entirely orderly. Though supported by miraculous powers, she, without noise or tumult, extends her conquests; while she employs such means, as may not only enlarge her dominions, for the present, but secure the fruit of her peaceful victories to Posterity.

THE Apostles, and other witnesses of the Resurrection, seem to have remained for many years at Jerusalem, or in

its neighbourhood. This, however, did not arise from any aversion which they had to encounter difficulties in foreign lands. The reverse appears from every feature in their character. But while desirous to promote the salvation of their countrymen, they wished the truth of the Gospel history to be fully ascertained in that country, and among that people, to whom it had a peculiar reference. Had they acted otherwise, a new series of miracles might have become necessary, in order to transmit the great facts, on which the Gospel is built, with sufficient evidence, to distant generations.

WHILE the Apostles remained themselves at Jerusalem, it is not to be supposed, but that they would have early sent forth Missionaries to other places, had they found, among their converts, men qualified for that office, and whose labours were not so necessary in the city of Jerusalem. An idea, indeed, has perhaps been entertained, that the Church was for a time somewhat dilatory in the discharge of their duty; and that it was only, when compelled by persecution, that they began to extend their labours, and that their zeal rose to its proper height. No idea can be more unscriptural. The Preachers of the Gospel were, from the beginning, animated with zeal corresponding to the magnitude of the object which was before them. But as they acted by the direction of the Holy Ghost, so they avoided every hasty measure, which might have finally injured the cause which they promoted.

It is difficult to ascertain what was the extent of these extraordinary gifts, which were conferred on the first Preachers of Christianity. But we are expressly told, that they did not all center in the same persons. "Are all Apostles? Are all Prophets? Are all Teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? Do



all speak with tongues? Do all interpret <sup>e</sup>?" It is probable that, of those at Jerusalem, none received the gift of tongues, on the day of Pentecost, but the Apostles. For, when dispersed at the death of Stephen, none, but some men of Cyprus and Cyrene, are said to have preached the Gospel to any other but the natives of Judea <sup>f</sup>. At the same time, it is evident that they had no scruple to associate, either with those Jews who were natives of other countries, or with such Profelytes as observed the ceremonial law.

THERE is no doubt that the Apostles and others, would carefully mark, among their converts, every person who might be qualified for the Ministry of the Gospel. Notwithstanding, it appears from the very face of the Sacred History, that there was a comparative scarcity of Preachers at Jerusalem. Accordingly, as far as the history of the Acts carries us, we find that they were only a few individuals, who declared the glad tidings of salvation, far beyond the territories of Judea. Apollos, a native of Alexandria, which was not far distant from Judea, and where many Jews resided, when he came to Ephesus many years after the ascension of Christ, seems to have met with no Preacher of Christianity <sup>g</sup>. To what cause can we ascribe this, but the following, that, as in the time of our Saviour's Ministry, so in that of his Apostles, "the harvest was plentiful but the labourers few?" no general commission having been given to the Christian Converts, to go forth to preach the Gospel.

Of the natives of Judea, no public Teachers are said, for a considerable time, to have been converted by the doctrine of the Apostles. At the same time, the great body of the Jewish people were grossly ignorant. As few in that age, could purchase a copy of the Law and of the Prophets,

<sup>e</sup> 1 Cor. xii. 29, 30.

<sup>f</sup> Acts xi. 19, 20.

<sup>g</sup> Acts xviii. 24, 25.

so fewer could read them; and as the vulgar dialect had been much changed, during their captivity at Babylon, so still fewer, perhaps, when those writings were read in their hearing, could understand them.\* For this reason, as well as for others, it might be our Saviour caused his disciples so long to attend his own Ministry, before he gave them any authority to instruct others. But had the Apostles received authority to confer ordination, on those who had not previously devoted themselves to the study of the Scriptures, it is evident that the Church would have been earlier supplied with Teachers, and that Missions would have been much sooner undertaken to other countries. There is, therefore, every reason to think, that though all who embraced the Gospel abounded in faith and charity, yet their progress in knowledge did, in general, bear some proportion to their previous habits and means of improvement. God never unnecessarily multiplies miracles. He is debtor to none of his creatures. He bestows his benefits with sovereign but unerring Wisdom. No man can form a claim upon him for any gift, whether of an ordinary or extraordinary nature, which He may have been pleased to bestow.

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THE zeal of the first converts to Christianity, we may learn from those acts of charity, which many of them performed. Not a few sold their possessions, whether patrimonial or acquired, and appropriated the price to the good of the Church. This formed a stock which was applied, not only for the relief of the poor, but for the support of those who were engaged in the work of the Ministry. The latter the Historian seems to have in view, when he

\* The Pharisees who were a learned sect, and either Scribes or Rulers, speak very contemptuously of the knowledge of the common people among the Jews. "Have any of the Rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him," But this *people* (*ἔχλος*) who know not the law are accursed." John vii. 48, 49.

says, "all were in one place, and had all things common <sup>h</sup>," no distinction being made betwixt the natives of Judea and believing strangers, but what arose from superiority of office. With respect to other persons who were in want, they appear to have received a daily allowance which might support them in their own houses <sup>i</sup>. The distribution of this money the Apostles, though they themselves received it from the Donors <sup>k</sup>, seem from the beginning to have given up to the hands of others <sup>l</sup>. These, we have every reason to think, were some of the Hundred and Twenty who received the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost: for we read, that when the Church at Antioch had afterwards made a contribution for the saints at Jerusalem, they sent it to the *Elders* by the hands of Barnabas and Saul <sup>m</sup>. That none of the Grecians had at first any share in this business, appears from the complaint itself which they made against the Hebrews: A circumstance which obviously marks a superiority of office in some who first received the Holy Ghost, to those who might be afterwards ordained by the Apostles. The former probably acted as Evangelists for the whole city; and, while called to water the different congregations which were found in it, did, at stated times, distribute charity to those who stood in need of it. Of them, then, it seems to be said, "And in those days there was a murmuring of the Grecians against the *Hebrews*, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration." Any instance of neglect to the Grecians, on the part of the Hebrews, would more easily excite umbrage, as it would be supposed to proceed from that partiality, which the latter had to their own countrymen.

HOWEVER it was, the Apostles make no inquiry into the past; but they provide a remedy for the future. It is said, "The Twelve called the multitude of the disciples,

<sup>h</sup> Acts ii. 44.

<sup>i</sup> Acts vi. 1.

<sup>k</sup> Acts iv. 37.

<sup>l</sup> Acts vi. 2.

<sup>m</sup> Acts xi. 30.



and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and of wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business." It has generally been supposed, that the Apostles here called together the whole multitude of Christians at Jerusalem; and that they laid down an office which they found to be inconvenient. But there is no evidence, that the Apostles either laid down any office themselves, or that they deprived others of a trust which had been formerly assigned them. They only committed a share of that office to men from among the Grecians. Accordingly, by "the multitude of disciples" whom they call together, the context itself leads us to understand "the whole company of strangers" who were at Jerusalem; for it was of them the Historian spake. In further proof of this, let it be observed, that the names of all the Seven, who are now chosen, are of Greek original.\* One of the persons is said to be a Profelyte of Antioch, the rest being probably of Hebrew extraction.

To this, the future conduct of those men corresponds. As Stephen directs his Ministry to the strangers who resided at Jerusalem, so, after the dispersion which took place, Philip, unaccompanied by any of the Jews, went to preach the Gospel to the Samaritans. Paul, who was a native of Cilicia, did, after his conversion, observe the same conduct on coming to Jerusalem<sup>n</sup>.

BUT it is necessary farther to inquire into the character of those, who are to be entrusted with this important office.

<sup>n</sup> Acts vi. 9 — viii. 5. — ix. 29.

\* Στέφανος a crown, φιλιππος a lover of horses, προχορος leader of the Chorus, Νικανωρ conqueror of men, τιμων one who gives honour, παρμενης a man of firmness, Νικολαος conqueror of the people. It is true that some Greek names were now introduced among the Jews. But they were few. Philip is the only one which we find among the names of the Twelve Apostles.

Though the choice be left to the Grecians, yet that is restricted to men of a certain description °. First, then it is said, "they must be men of honest report." It is submitted to the reader, acquainted with the Greek language, whether the whole of this clause in the Sacred History, may not be more naturally rendered thus, "Look ye out seven men whom ye yourselves approve." \* The part of their character which follows, is more worthy of attention, "men full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom." This is a character which could scarcely be ascribed to any, who were not distinguished as Ministers of the word. Wherever, indeed, those terms occur in Scripture, they seem to have a reference to extraordinary gifts. As Jesus, after the descent of the Divine Spirit, was said to be full of the Holy Ghost, so was Paul, when in the Spirit of Prophecy he denounced a curse, upon a certain person, which was immediately executed †. The same character is ascribed ‡ to Barnabas, who was sent as an Evangelist to Antioch, and who, in token of his peculiar endowments, had been surnamed by the Apostles, "A son of consolation." It may therefore be concluded that the Seven here chosen, according to the direction of the Apostles, were men of the most distinguished ministerial talents among the Grecians. This accounts for the part which two of them are expressly said to act: for, rising above the rank of ordinary Pastors, they appear in the high character of Evangelists, and work miracles in common with the Apostles †.

LET it not be considered as an objection to what has been said, that the Apostles would not have now ordained those men as Ministers of charity, had they formerly ordained them to the Ministry of the word. The Apostles seem to have performed this ceremony, not merely in token of ex-

° Acts vi. 3.

† Luke iv. 1. Acts xiii. 9.

‡ Acts xi. 24.

\* Acts vi. 8.—viii. 6, 7.

† ἄνδρες ἐξ ὑμῶν μαρτυροῦμεν.

traordinary gifts to be conferred, but in token of their desire, that every farther supply of wisdom might be given to those whom they entrusted with any new office or commission. Accordingly when Paul and Barnabas, already eminent Ministers of the word, were sent forth upon a new mission, the Prophets and Teachers, who were at Antioch, are said "to have laid their hands on them and prayed<sup>a</sup>." But if Ordination, to an inferior office, was reckoned necessary, even for those men who already acted in a higher capacity, how much more necessary was it, at first, for the discharge of that office, which in itself is so much more important?

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## SECTION V.

*Dispersion of the Church at Jerusalem—No argument thence to be deduced for Lay-Preaching.*

WE are now come in view of what every superficial observer will look to, as the strong-hold of the Doctrine of Lay-Preaching. Formidable does the bulwark appear from afar! But, as we advance and consider it, it seems to be nothing more than a castle in the air!—and a few shafts of truth, it is hoped, will dispel the meteor.

AFTER Stephen, one of the Seven, as by way of eminence they are called, had been stoned to death, with the approbation of the Jewish Council, and connivance, or, perhaps, ignorance of the Roman Governor, it is said by the Writer of the Acts, "There was a great persecution against the Church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all

<sup>a</sup> Acts xiii. 3.

<sup>b</sup> Acts viii. 1—4.



scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the Apostles;" and again, "They who were scattered abroad went every where preaching the Word<sup>c</sup>."

It had formerly occurred, even to those who favoured an Independent form of Ecclesiastical Government, that the term *church* might, according to the ordinary use of language, be applied to those persons, whether immediately appointed by God, or delegated by their brethren, who were peculiarly entrusted with the affairs of any Christian Society. As therefore Stephen had been singled out from among the people, so it is natural to think that, when a persecution is said to be raised against the Church, nothing more was meant than that it was raised against men, who, like him, were acting in a public capacity. But says a writer in the Missionary Magazine, The term Church can only be applied, to the collective body of the Christian converts. Therefore all, or the greater part of these must now have been dispersed; whence it appears, that not only *delegated* Preachers, but *all others* went through the land preaching the Word. A more ridiculous interpretation of Scripture was never given. The argument is erroneous in its principle. But, otherwise, the inference deduced from it is inconclusive.

HAD that Gentleman read two verses more of the Chapter in which this subject is contained, he might have found the term *church* applied, not to the collective body of Christians, or even a considerable number of them, but to those individuals, perhaps of greater eminence, against whom the malice of Saul was peculiarly directed.<sup>d</sup> If so, why not to those men, possessing extraordinary gifts, who, like Stephen or the Apostles, devoted their time to the public

<sup>c</sup> Acts viii. 1, 4.

<sup>d</sup> Acts viii. 3.

service of the Church. \* It is, indeed, probable that, even where the term is applied to Christians *in general*, it has a *peculiar* reference to those invested with a public office. Paul addresses one of his Epistles to the *Church* of the Thessalonians; but he informs us whom he had particularly in view, when he says to the Rulers of that Church, "I charge you by the Lord, that this Epistle be read to all the holy brethren <sup>c</sup>."

BUT passing over all controversy about the meaning of a term, the reader is requested to attend to the illustration of the two following Remarks,

FIRST, That the persecution raised on the death of Stephen, was not such as to produce any thing like a general dispersion of the Christian converts at Jerusalem;

SECOND, That though more had been dispersed than Preachers of the Gospel, there is no evidence arises from the words of the Sacred Historian, that they took any share in the Ministry of the Word.

INTERPRETERS of Scripture seem, in general, by much to have overrated the persecution whose nature is here to be considered. They did not reflect, that no blood is said

\* So we find this very term used in the Septuagint Version of the Old Testament, Deut. xxxi. 28—30; where Moses says to the *Levites* already met before him, "Gather unto me (*ἐκκλησιασταίς*) all the *Elders* of your tribes, and your *Officers*, &c. It is added, "And Moses spake in the ears of all the *Congregation* of Israel (*ἐκκλησίας*). The term Church properly means an Assembly.—If therefore the Apostles and other Ministers of the Gospel, were in use sometimes to meet *alone* for the transaction of business, the term would of course be applied to them by way of eminence.—That in Acts xv. 22. it means believers, as distinguished from office-bearers, does not seem altogether incontrovertible.

<sup>c</sup> 1 Thess. i. i. and v. 27.

to be shed, but that of Stephen; and that the Historian would naturally style that a great persecution which, for a time, deprived the saints at Jerusalem of so many faithful Pastors. The Translators, of our version of the Bible, have fallen into the same mistake. But the reader will be enabled to judge of the extent of this persecution, when he considers, for a moment, the following literal Translation of the passage of Scripture which speaks of it. It runs thus,

“ AND Saul was consenting to his (Stephen’s) death. And *on that day* \* there was a great persecution against the Church which was at Jerusalem; and all were dispersed throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the Apostles. And devout men carried out Stephen to his burial, and made a great lamentation over him. As for Saul, he made havock of the Church, entering *into the houses* †, and haling men and women, committed them to prison.”

By attending to the above statement of this persecution, every person of discernment will perceive to have been such as the following.

ON the same day in which Stephen was killed, many relying on the protection of the Jewish Rulers, or acting under their authority, began to offer outrage to the Ministers of the Gospel, who were preaching the word. The fury of the former was so great, though not said to terminate in blood, that all the latter either left the city, or so entirely disappeared, as to justify the Historian in saying, “ They were *all* scattered abroad.” In the mean time, which shews the persecution was not general, devout men, without molestation, carried Stephen to his burial, and made a great lamentation over him. As for Saul, he carried

\* *ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ.*

† *κατὰ τοὺς οἴκους.*



the persecution farther than his companions ; for entering into the houses of private families, which were probably the receptacles of those who preached the doctrine of Christ, he dragged both men and women to prison. This would cause any few Ministers who might have concealed themselves, also, to leave the city.

As Christians would make no resistance to their persecutors, so all might pass without exciting such confusion, as to draw the attention of the Roman Governor. It farther appears, that the hottest persecution was carried on by Saul. " He made havock of the Church." But wherein did that consist ? Not in shedding streams of blood. To that length, supported as he was by the Jewish Council, he durst not proceed. But entering into some of the houses of the Christians, he committed a few men and women to prison. That either the Jews should have purposed to imprison the great body of Christian converts, or that all these should have left the city, for the imprisonment of a few, are ideas too absurd to need any answer.

THERE is no evidence whatever, that this persecution was protracted beyond the day of Stephen's martyrdom. The words of the Historian are literally rendered, " on that day", or more emphatically, " on the same day." But, though the term *Day* is sometimes used for an indefinite time in prophetic language, yet never in a plain historical narration. Luke is always accurate in the use of his terms ; and, when about to mention a period of time more indefinitely, says either, " in those days," \* or, " about that time." † It may be supposed, indeed, that for a few days, the Jewish Council were employed in trying the persons imprisoned, and that they inflicted on them the only punishment which, without the consent of the Roman Governor,

\* ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ταύταις, Acts i. 15. † καὶ ἐκείνῃ τῷ καιρῷ, Acts xii. 1.

it was competent for them, that of beating in the Synagogue. It is probable, however, that they durst not farther patronize any open persecution in the city; nor do they seem at all to have carried it to the neighbourhood. When Saul, notwithstanding the death of Stephen and the punishment of others, still breathed out threatening and death against the Disciples of Jesus, he obtained from the chief Priests letters to Damascus, which lay beyond the limits of Herod's jurisdiction<sup>f</sup>. He himself afterwards, in his confession to God, mentions the extent to which he carried this persecution; when he states its different parts, probably, not according to the order of time in which they happened, but according to the degrees of guilt which they contained, "Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in *the Synagogues* them that believed on thee; and when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them who slew him<sup>g</sup>."

It is remarkable that, at this time, the Apostles met with no molestation. Perhaps the Jewish Rulers, finding that neither threats nor any punishment which they could inflict, could deter them from their duty, were unwilling to exhibit a new proof of the weakness of their own power. Perhaps, as the Apostles continued in a more public part of the city, where multitudes attended, their enemies were afraid of exciting a tumult by attacking them. Or it may be supposed, that Saul spared them, from respect to the opinion of his Master Gamaliel. This, however, was scarcely to be expected, had there been any thing like a general persecution raised against the Christian converts.

BUT, though such was the extent of this persecution, yet, in order to refute the Doctrine of Lay-Preaching, it is not

<sup>f</sup> Acts ix, 1, 2.

<sup>g</sup> Acts xxii. 19, 20.

necessary to maintain that none but Preachers of the Gospel left Jerusalem on this occasion. Not a few might accompany them. If they did, it was in Judea only : \* for none seem to have accompanied Philip to Samaria<sup>b</sup>. But does it thence follow that any of them publicly preached the word ? By no means. The Historian, indeed, says, " They who were scattered abroad went through the land preaching the word." But is it not customary to ascribe to a Society what any one of them performs, while the rest countenance him in the performance ? Of this we have a striking instance in this History. Says Luke of Paul and of the others, who, beside himself, accompanied that Apostle, " We went out to a place where prayer was wont to be made, and we sat down and spake to the women who resorted thither ;" though, it is evident, Paul was the only person who spake on this occasion<sup>c</sup>. If then it be the part of Lay-Preachers, to give support and countenance to those, who have been set apart to the Ministry, it might be said, " Many such Preachers may we have. Instead of going forth to sow division, may they give support to the Gospel, wherever it is preached, by their regular attendance on its ordinances, and by their exemplary conduct."

<sup>b</sup> Acts viii. 5.

<sup>c</sup> Acts xvi. 13, 14.

\* As Philip, one of the Seven, is the only person who went to Samaria, so two Apostles, on hearing of his success, went to confirm his converts in the faith ; and in their return to Jerusalem, they preached the Gospel in many villages of the Samaritans. Afterwards, the same Philip went towards Gaza, on the south of Jerusalem, where he met with the Ethiopian Eunuch ; and beginning at Azotus, he preached in all the most populous cities, lying on the Mediterranean coast, till he came to Cæsarea, where he seems to have taken up his residence. Acts viii. 40, and xxi. 8. Had there been Five or Six Thousand Preachers dispersed, surely some Grecian might have been spared to accompany him. Nor could there have been any necessity for him either to have left Samaria so soon, or to have travelled over so large a proportion of the land of Judea.



HAD the Historian's expression been more determinate, "all who were scattered abroad," it will appear from the above observation, that it would amount to no *direct* proof of the doctrine of Lay-Preaching. It might justly be objected, that the Historian could mean those *only*, who, having been found qualified to preach the Gospel at Jerusalem, were *expected* to do the same in the country around.

NOTHING is more common, in languages not highly refined, than to use general terms when a part of the persons or objects, denoted by them, were really in view. In the verse preceding that under consideration it is said, "Paul entered into *the houses*," when surely not *all* the houses of Christians, but a *few* were intended. Nay, that very expression, on which so much stress has been laid, is used when speaking of those, who, after the persecution upon Stephen, went in a particular direction, and proceeded farther than others in preaching the Gospel. "Now they who were scattered abroad travelled as far as Phenice and Cyprus and Antioch <sup>k</sup>. Surely they were only a part who proceeded so far, or who went in that direction. It seems often to be the object of an Historian, to state rather the *reality* of an action, than the *precise manner* in which it was done. On this account it is, we find many phrases in Scripture, which, for the sake of the unlearned, it was, perhaps, proper in our version of the Bible to have rendered with more precision. The reader may consider the following examples, "Then the Disciples found fault," one of them did so <sup>l</sup>. "They who were crucified with Jesus threw the same in his teeth <sup>m</sup>," one of them did so. "How shall we be baptized for the dead <sup>n</sup>," for a dead person. "When they were slain," when one of them was slain, "I

<sup>k</sup> Acts xi. 19.    <sup>l</sup> Matth. xxvi. 8. John xii. 4.    <sup>m</sup> Matth. xxvii. 44.

<sup>n</sup> I Cor. xv. 29. ὑπὲρ τῶν νεκρῶν.

gave my voice against them °." To found a general doctrine upon such expressions, shews a gross ignorance of Scripture criticism. \*

° Acts xxvi. 10.—See also verse 11. compared with chap. ix. 2.

\* Since writing this Section, an idea has been suggested to me by a learned Friend, respecting the meaning of *διασπαρσαν*, "were scattered abroad;" which idea appeared to me so good, that for a time I suspected its truth, but, upon farther investigation, am fully convinced of it. It is just hinted by Henry, in his Commentary upon the Bible. It is, that the Preachers of the Gospel did not leave Jerusalem, so much on account of the violence of the persecution, as in obedience to the command of Christ, "when they persecute you in one city, flee ye into another." Matth. x. 23. Certain it is that *διασπειρω* does not so properly signify to "disperse by violence," as another verb *διασκορπιζω*, which we find employed, Matth. xxvi. 31. and Acts v. 37. The former word implies no more than "to separate," by whatever means that is effected. After the confusion of tongues, God is said to have scattered men on the face of the earth (*διασπειρεν*) when in the course of his Providence he led them to settle at a distance from one another. Many Jews were said, in the time of our Saviour, to be scattered among other nations (*διασπορα*) though their exile was voluntary. It may be further observed, that in all languages a verb in a passive form may sometimes have a neuter, or, as the Greeks say, a middle signification. Such is the case with the very verb in question, as used in the Septuagint Version of the Old Testament. When Pharaoh had denied straw to the Israelites, it is said, "they were scattered abroad," (*λαος διασπαρη*) that is, they of *their own accord* went in every direction in quest of stubble. When, therefore, the Church at Jerusalem is said to be scattered abroad, the meaning seems to be, that viewing the persecution raised against them as a signal to depart, they either of their own accord, or in concert with the Apostles, left the city, and distributed themselves in every direction. It is said to have been *along* (*κατα*) the regions of Judea and Samaria. Thus they either chose their directions, or had them pointed out to them. Luke continues their history in a following verse, "They then who had dispersed themselves went through the land preaching the word."

## SECTION VI.

*Case of Apollos—Necessity of Ordination inferred from that and an induction of other particulars.*

THE case of Apollos has been esteemed a Pillar of the doctrine of Lay-Preaching: It is here held forth as a *presumptive* proof of the contrary doctrine. The history of it is the following <sup>P</sup>.

THE Apostle Paul, having remained in Corinth, the chief city of Achaia, for a year and six months, came to Ephesus on his way to Jerusalem. There accompanied him Aquila and his wife Priscilla, Jews with whom he had been lodged in the former city. Then he left at Ephesus, in order to pursue his journey to Jerusalem. But before he departed, he went into the Jewish Synagogue, and discoursed out of the Scriptures concerning Christ. It appears that at this time he made no converts; but, as the Jews were desirous farther to hear him, he promised to return at some future period.

In the mean time, Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. This man knew nothing but the baptism of John, the forerunner of our Lord. But though he had no particular knowledge of Christian Doctrine, yet, convinced that Jesus was the Messiah, and well-versed in the writings of the Old Testament, he began openly to declare his opinion in the Synagogue. It has been supposed that Apollos did this, without authority from any Christian Society, or from the Jewish Synagogue; and therefore must have been a Lay-Preacher. That he had received a commission from

<sup>P</sup> Acts xviii. 1—11. and 18—28. Chap. xix. 1—6.



no Christians to teach any Doctrine of the Gospel, is certain. But before any argument was founded upon this, for the Doctrine of Lay-Preaching, it was incumbent on the Patrons thereof to shew, at least, the *probability* that he was not a Jewish Scribe: for, if he was, he certainly had authority to expound, in the Synagogue, the Scriptures of the Old Testament. And it is well known, that, when a learned stranger took his seat among the Doctors of the Law, in any Synagogue, they, after the usual service, invited him to give a word of exhortation to the people<sup>9</sup>. So far, therefore, from it being probable that Apollos was not a Scribe, it may be viewed as certain, or next to certain, that he was. It is not, however, of so much consequence, to ascertain, whether what he now did was orderly, as to consider the part which he acted, after he became farther acquainted with Christianity.

It is said, "that Aquila and Priscilla having heard him, they took him *unto them*, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly." This they appear to have done privately: for Aquila seems not at all to have spoken in the Synagogue. But had Apollos, after this conversation, considered himself as authorized to preach the Gospel, we can scarcely imagine, but that he would have continued his Ministry at Ephesus, where so large a field was opened to him; at least, that, before his departure, he would have imparted to any who were friendly to Christianity, that additional information which he himself had now received. But, so far from doing so, he immediately forms the purpose of going to Achaia, which was already plentifully supplied with Ministers of the Word. Nor do Aquila and Priscilla dissuade him from his purpose. On the contrary, they urge him to the performance of it. Accordingly we read, "that when he was disposed to pass into Achaia,

<sup>9</sup> Acts xiii. 14, 15.

the brethren wrote exhorting the disciples to receive him." These words were more naturally rendered in an Old English Version of the Bible, "The Brethren encouraging him wrote to the disciples to receive him<sup>r</sup>." The persons who did so seem to have been Aquila and Priscilla.\* There is no proof, however, that this letter amounted to a Mission. It could be nothing but an attestation of Apollos's zeal for Christianity, which Aquila could give. Though not mentioned in the concise history which Luke gives of this matter, yet we have as good reason to think that Apollos, on his arrival at Corinth, would receive additional instruction, with Ordination, from the Pastors of that city; as that he would receive from them the rite of Christian Baptism.

<sup>r</sup> Acts xviii. 27. προτρεψαμενοι οι αδελφοι ἔγραψαν τοις μαθηταῖς ἀποδεξασθαι αὐτόν.

\* αὐτοῦ Βουλευμένου "when he was disposed" may very properly denote the state of a man's mind, who has an inclination to perform any action, but may feel a degree of reluctance, or may not be so fully resolved as to be in no danger of changing his purpose. The proper meaning of προτρεπω is to give incitement to a person in that situation. This accounts for a certain reading of verse 27th, which we find in one Manuscript of the New Testament. It is the following, "Certain Corinthians who sojourned at Ephesus having heard him (Apollos) beseeched him to pass with them into their native country; to which he having consented, the Ephesians wrote to the disciples at Corinth to receive him." This seems at first to have been a marginal note, and contained the opinion of some Transcriber of the New Testament; but had at last crept into the text itself. It is in several respects incorrect. Aquila and Priscilla were not natives of Corinth. Nor do they seem to have returned thither with Apollos. Had any Ephesians joined them in their recommendation of Apollos, these could not have failed to receive from them a fuller knowledge of Christian doctrine than they possessed at the return of Paul. Every one acquainted with the Greek language may know, that a brother and a sister may be styled ἀδελφοί "brethren." If Aquila and Priscilla remained at Ephesus, it may be viewed as certain that they did not there preach the word. Perhaps they took a journey to Pontus their native country; and meeting with Paul in Galatia, returned with him to Ephesus, where we find them residing, when Paul wrote his first Epistle to the Corinthians. See Wettstein's Edition of the Greek New Testament. Acts xviii. 27.

It is no objection to this, that he appeared at Corinth in a higher character, than that of an ordinary Pastor. Even an immediate call from God, to the work of the Ministry, would, by no means, preclude the necessity either of Baptism or Ordination. As then we are led to think that, after his conversation with Aquila, he did not preach the Gospel till he came to Corinth, so we have every reason to believe, that his design in going thither, was to receive a still more accurate information of the Doctrines of the Gospel, and to be set apart to the work of the Ministry, in that manner which God had appointed.

WHAT renders this the more probable is, that Apollos neither baptizes, in the name of Christ, any converts whom he seems to have made at Ephesus, nor waits to give them any further instruction respecting the nature of the Gospel. When Paul returned, none of them knew any other but the baptism of John<sup>a</sup>, which Apollos as a Scribe seems to have administered. Upon the principles of Lay-Preachers, we cannot but censure the conduct of both Apollos and Aquila. Is there any other principle upon which it can be accounted for, than that they were averse to exhibit, in public, an imperfect view of Christian Doctrine? or to rush upon the discharge of an office, for which they had not been duly found qualified?

As the conduct of Apollos thus affords the highest probability that no man did of his own accord enter upon the office of the Ministry, in the times of the Apostles, so the reader is requested to attend to the following particulars, which may throw farther light upon this subject.

**BOTH** our Saviour and the witnesses of his Resurrection

<sup>a</sup> Acts xix. 2, 3.



began their Ministry, not only in consequence of a previous appointment, but after they received the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

THE Apostle Peter declared to those strangers who were converted on the day of Pentecost, that, on believing the Gospel, they would receive the Holy Spirit in his extraordinary influences.

WE learn from the history of the Samaritans, that the same was conferred, with the *laying on of the hands* of the Apostles <sup>b</sup>.

IN that manner the Seven Grecians, were ordained as Ministers of charity <sup>c</sup>.

IN a manner, however, still more solemn, when Peter preached to Cornelius and his friends (who were the first fruits from among the Gentiles) the Holy Spirit descended upon them, without the imposition of hands, which otherwise would have been observed. In consequence thereof, they spake with other tongues, and magnified God <sup>d</sup>.

THOUGH Paul was immediately called to the Ministry by Christ himself, yet he was both baptized, and ordained by a person, whom God sent to him for that purpose <sup>e</sup>.

WHEN the same Apostle and Barnabas were afterwards sent on a particular Mission, the Prophets and Teachers, who were at Antioch, laid their hands on them and prayed <sup>f</sup>.

PAUL adduces it as a proof of his extraordinary commission to preach the Gospel, that, when called by Christ, he

<sup>b</sup> Acts viii. 17.

<sup>c</sup> Acts vi. 6.

<sup>d</sup> Acts x. 44—46.

<sup>e</sup> Acts ix. 17.

Acts xiii. 3.

did not go to those who were Apostles before him<sup>g</sup>; and that when he found occasion to go to Jerusalem, the Apostles who were there did not question his authority, nor give him any new instructions<sup>h</sup>. The contrary must have been practised in ordinary cases.

WHEN certain persons come from Jerusalem to Antioch, insisted on the observance of the ceremonial Law by the Gentiles, the Apostles and Elders at Jerusalem, declared that they had not commanded them<sup>i</sup>.

AFTER Paul and Barnabas had preached the Gospel in a large tract of country, they returned, and ordained them Elders in every city<sup>k</sup>.

WITH respect to those who accompanied Paul, and assisted him in his labours, Luke is not so minute as to mention every circumstance in their history. With respect, however, to one of them, to whom Paul wrote two Epistles, we learn that he had been ordained, by the laying on not only of Paul's hands, but of those of the Presbytery<sup>l</sup>. We cannot doubt that the same ceremony was performed to other official persons, who accompanied that Apostle.

NOTWITHSTANDING, that he did not confer ordination on all who seemed peculiarly friendly to Christianity, may be inferred from the conduct of Aquila at Ephesus.

WHEN Paul had found certain disciples at Ephesus, he baptized them in the name of Christ, and laid his hands on them; in consequence whereof they spake with tongues and prophesied<sup>m</sup>.

<sup>g</sup> Gal. i. 17.

<sup>h</sup> Gal. ii. 6—9.

<sup>i</sup> Acts xv. 24.

<sup>k</sup> Acts xiv. 23.

<sup>l</sup> 1 Tim. iv. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Tim. i. 6.

<sup>m</sup> Acts xix. 6.

MANY years thereafter, that Apostle left Timothy at Ephesus, with the powers of an Evangelist, that he might not only correct the errors which appeared in the doctrine of some, but ordain others to the work of the Ministry; and he commands him not rashly to lay hands upon any <sup>n</sup>.

THE same charge he seems afterwards to have given him with respect to other places, probably, in the Lesser Asia; <sup>o</sup> for, in his second Epistle, he seems to speak as if Timothy had left Ephesus <sup>p</sup>.

IN the same manner Paul left Titus in Crete, "that he might set in order the things which were wanting, and ordain Elders in every city <sup>q</sup>."

SUCH a variety of examples are more than sufficient to establish a general rule for the practice of the Church. They prove that Ordination is an appointment of God, and necessary for every one who would take upon him publicly to teach the Doctrines of Christianity. For any person, therefore, especially in a land where the Gospel is already preached, of his own accord to take upon him the office of a Public Preacher or Teacher in any form, as it is a breach of good order, so it is an express violation of the command of Christ. It tends not only to introduce disorder into Christian Societies, but to bring contempt upon any thing that resembles a regular Ministry. It is not to "come in by the door into the sheep-fold, but climb up some other way."—Nor, if we attend to the example of the Apostolic Churches, can we be at any loss what he ought to do, who unexpectedly found himself surrounded by those who were perishing in their ignorance. If, in his intercourse with them, he gave them some information respecting the way of salvation by Christ; yet, did he possess a Missionary

<sup>n</sup> 1 Tim. i 3, and v. 22.    <sup>o</sup> 2 Tim. ii 2.    <sup>p</sup> 2 Tim. iv 12.    <sup>q</sup> Tit. iv. 5.



spirit, he would embrace the first opportunity of repairing to those who were Teachers before him, and thus, in the first instance, shew his firm belief of the divinity of those ordinances, which he wished to recommend to others.

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## SECTION VII.

*Farther qualifications of an Itinerant—Nature of a Stated Ministry—Ordination competent only for the Ministers of the Gospel.*

IN the course of our Remarks we have been led to consider the practice of the Apostolic Church, with respect to those sent forth to preach the Gospel. The trial of their gifts was left not to their own determination, but to that of others. The wisdom of such a rule is abundantly obvious. Had every man been permitted to preach the Gospel, it is evident they might have disseminated, in Judea and elsewhere, such imperfect or erroneous views of Doctrine, as would have created, in the minds of many, a prejudice against our holy Religion. And is it not well known, that none are so forward, as those who want either humility to consider their own deficiency, or discernment to perceive the importance of the work, upon which they enter?

In order to render the doctrine of Lay-Preaching the more plausible, a distinction has been made betwixt Preaching and Teaching—the one referring to the first principles of Faith, the other to the superstructure of Doctrine—the one being competent for any man who chuses to take upon him the office of an Itinerant, the other for him to whom any congregation may submit as a stated Pastor. Such seems to be the sum of the doctrine which is taught

in the *Missionary Magazine*. It is evident that the persons who hold it, must make very little account of Ordination to the Ministry; or rather will be tempted to think it altogether unnecessary. The reader may consider, how far that accords with the practice of the Church, as already stated. But the subject shall be further examined.

It is, no doubt, the duty of every Preacher, first to propound plainer and more essential doctrines, and then to lead his hearers towards perfection. But the Gentlemen above alluded to, seem not to understand, that more skill is required to establish first principles, than to rear upon them a superstructure of Doctrine. An error in the foundation of any building can seldom be rectified. To *tell* the world, as is said, that Jesus was the Saviour of sinners, was but a small part of the work of an Apostle or Evangelist. Speaking to men as reasonable creatures, they were required to *prove*, by a connected view of the prophecies of the Old Testament, that Jesus was the Messiah; and to refute every plausible objection to that doctrine, which might be started. Farther, in Heathen countries, it was their duty, to point out the errors there entertained, in that manner which might most effectually carry conviction to the mind. Nor can any person be ignorant, that, in Judea and other lands, there were many Masters of reason, who would have held up to ridicule every doctrine which was weakly supported. Did not Paul find it necessary to *dispute* in the Jewish Synagogues? Did he not daily discourse, in an argumentative form, for more than two years, at Ephesus<sup>a</sup>? Did not the learned among the Heathen, challenge him to defend the doctrine which he advanced? So far, therefore, from every man being at first employed, to disseminate the plainer doctrines of the Gospel, the persons who were so employed, were the most eminent in the Christian Church. Said

<sup>a</sup> Acts xix. 8, 9.

Paul upon this subject, "I, as a wise *Master-builder* have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon<sup>b</sup>." "God gave *first* Apostles, then Prophets, then Evangelists, and, last of all, Pastors and Teachers." What then is the part reserved for Lay-Preachers? It is afterwards described; but is of a more passive nature than that of the former, "for the perfecting of the *Saints*, for the edifying of the *body* of Christ<sup>c</sup>."

THOUGH the witnesses of the Resurrection were generally illiterate men, yet they received a proportionably higher degree of miraculous gifts. Their office being to attest that which they had seen and heard, uniformity and consistency of testimony were in them chiefly required. Notwithstanding, by the discourses of Jesus, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, they seem to have acquired the most accurate and extensive knowledge of Scriptural Doctrine. Farther, they had attained that degree of human learning, which enabled them to commit to writing the doctrine which they taught the Churches. With respect, however, to those who preached the Gospel at a distance from the scene of our Lord's miracles, they were, as far as Scripture enables us to form an opinion, men who, besides extraordinary gifts, possessed much acquired information. Every one knows what was the character of Paul the great Apostle of the Gentiles. The Evangelists Timothy and Titus, seem, from the cautions which Paul gives them, to have been capable of introducing into their discourses, a variety of both Jewish and other Eastern Learning<sup>d</sup>. Barnabas was a Levite and man of property from Cyprus; and we may infer that the same was the case with Mark his nephew<sup>e</sup>. Silas, or Silvanus, who accompanied Paul as an Apostle, was a Roman citizen<sup>f</sup>; a privilege which could not be acquired

<sup>b</sup> 1 Cor. iii. 10.

<sup>c</sup> Eph. iv. 11, 12.

<sup>d</sup> 1 Tim. vi. 20. Tit. iii. 9.

<sup>e</sup> Acts iv. 36, 37.

<sup>f</sup> Acts xvi. 37.



but by men of eminence<sup>g</sup>. Apollos was a learned Jew from Alexandria—Erastus chamberlain of the city of Corinth—Sosthenes and Crispus Rulers in the Synagogue—Luke a Physician, Zenas a Lawyer, both learned professions. \* Such were the principal persons whom we find employed as Apostles or Evangelists in the whole Western part of the Roman Empire. Though not many *mighty* or *noble* were called, it appears that those of them who were called, were raised to the highest offices in the Christian Church. But if a preference was *then* given to learning, how much more necessary is it *now*, that extraordinary gifts are withdrawn, in those who preach the Gospel?

HITHERTO our attention has been directed, chiefly, to those who preached the Gospel to the world at large. But we have also seen, that the Apostles ordained Pastors over those Churches which they planted. As God gave some to be Apostles and Evangelists, so he gave others to be Pastors and Teachers. Though these might be called to disseminate the knowledge of the Gospel in the country adjacent to the city or place where they resided, yet their labours were peculiarly due to the flock of which they had the oversight. Hence Paul said to the Elders of the Church at

<sup>g</sup> Acts xxii. 28.      <sup>h</sup> Acts xx. 28.

\* I may add Clement, who has left Epistles to the Churches still extant; as well as Tertius and others, whom Paul employed as Amanuenses in writing to the Churches.—The privilege of Roman citizen, was naturally desired by those Jews, who resided in foreign countries. By means of it they were protected against many insults from the Heathen. In Judea it would be of less use to them. This gives us reason to think that Silas, who first came from Jerusalem to Antioch, was one of those Grecians who had taken up their residence in the former city. The same were Paul as well as Barnabas and Mark, Lucius and others who are mentioned, Acts xiii. 1. Such too, it is likely, were Andronicus and Junius, kinsmen of Paul's, who were in Christ before him, Rom. xvi. 7.—Could Sosthenes have pled his right of a Roman citizen, the Greeks durst not have beat him uncondemned, and even Gallio would have found it necessary to care for such things.

Ephesus, "Take heed unto yourselves and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood <sup>h</sup>."—The manner in which those men were set apart to their office, will determine an important point in Church Government, which deserves here to be considered.

THAT the power of Ordination resided in the Ministers of the Word, appears from the whole tenour of Scripture. There it is always spoken of as their act. They alone could judge, who were qualified farther to instruct their converts. Not only did Paul ordain Elders in every church which he planted, but he afterwards sent Evangelists for the same purpose. On finding certain disciples at Ephesus, he conferred on them Ordination; and we cannot doubt that these did, *of course*, become Pastors to those, in that city, who afterwards embraced the Gospel.

In modern times, a distinction has been made betwixt License and Ordination; the former conferring a liberty to preach under certain restrictions, but investing with no office as Ordination does. Accordingly, the office-bearers in the Church determine, in the first instance, who are qualified to be candidates for the Ministry, but leave to others the power of nominating them to particular charges: Only they reserve to themselves the power of examining, anew, the proficiency which they make in the study of the Gospel, and the suitableness of their gifts to the Church to which they may be elected. Were this power duly exercised, it is evident that, as no evil could arise from the popular election of Ministers, so the Law of Patronage would be little felt by any Christian Society. The Ministers of the Gospel

<sup>h</sup> Acts xx. 28.      <sup>i</sup> Acts xix. 6.

might have it in their power, as far as human wisdom can reach, to furnish the Churches, under their inspection, with able and faithful Pastors.

As the above distinction was unknown to the Apostles, so it appears from what has been said, that they reserved to themselves the nomination of Pastors. The only shadow of proof which has been adduced for the contrary doctrine, consists in the meaning affixed to a certain term once employed by Luke, when speaking of this subject. As Paul and Barnabas were said to *ordain* elders to the disciples in every Church<sup>i</sup>, it is alledged, that the term “ordain” there employed signifies to appoint by the holding up of hands. But it is forgot, that this holding up of hands, or whatever it is, is mentioned as the act, not of a *multitude*, but of two individuals. It may be granted that the above is the meaning of the term, in Hellenistic Greek, when applied to a Society at large. Such, no doubt, was its meaning, as first used among the Republican States of Greece. But as words change their signification, when transported from one country to another, or when customs go into disuse which gave rise to them, so other proof must be sought, that such is the import of χειροτονω, when applied to one or two individuals. Like καθιστημι, which is also used with respect to this subject,<sup>k</sup> it then most naturally signifies simple appointment, and that by the person to whom the action is ascribed. In this sense it is applied to God, who could not be said to ordain his Apostles by the vote of any Assembly<sup>l</sup>, “Him (Jesus) God raised up the third day and shewed him openly; not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before of God, (προ-κεχειροτονημενοις) even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead.”

It is very unnatural to think, that converts who had re-

<sup>i</sup> Acts xiv. 23.

<sup>k</sup> Tit. i. 5.

<sup>l</sup> Acts x. 41.



ceived from the Apostles nothing but the elementary parts of Christianity, should have been esteemed able to judge, who were qualified to carry them forward in the knowledge of the Gospel. As soon might the child who had learned the letters of the Alphabet, choose a tutor to superintend his education. So far from any thing like this taking place in the Christian Church, we find that the Apostles gave only a limited authority, to those whom they ordained to teach the people. They committed to them a form of sound words, to which in their ministrations they were required to adhere. If they taught any thing contrary to this, they were exhorted to be found in the faith; but if they disobeyed the admonition, their office was taken from them by the same authority by which it was given.\* Even the gifts of tongues and of prophecy did not place any above the need of Apostolic controul and admonition. Though in the Church which was at Rome there were men eminent among the Apostles<sup>m</sup>, yet Paul declares his wish to impart to them some far-

<sup>m</sup> Rom. xvi. 7.

\* Both Timothy and Titus had authority from Paul to reprove, or altogether to silence those who taught improper doctrine. 1 Tim. i. 3. 7. Tit. i. 11. and iii. 10.—Paul seems to intimate to the Hebrew Churches, that Teachers themselves needed farther instruction in order fully to discharge the duties of their office; and he shews the danger of those, who, partaking of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, did not make progress in the knowledge of the Gospel. This he considers as next to Apostasy, Chap. v. 11. and vi. 4, 6.

The practice of the Apostles, in appointing Pastors, was probably the following. When any pious Scribe, such as Crispus and Sosthenes at Corinth, embraced the Gospel, they were, if willing to take it upon them, called to the office of the Christian Ministry.—Nearly on a par with them, would be reckoned any devout Greek, who was acquainted with the sacred writings. Such were Timothy, Titus, Jason, and others.—Next in order were many learned Heathen, such as Dionysius the Areopagite, who made proficiency in the knowledge of the Gospel. At the same time, it may be looked upon as certain, that none, whatever their mental qualifications were, received a share in the work of the Ministry, of whose unfeigned zeal the Apostles were not convinced, or who were not well reported of by the people, among whom they were to minister.

ther spiritual gift, that they might be established. He, indeed, apologizes for the Epistle which he writes to them: But his meaning can only be, that he did not question the abilities of those who already laboured in doctrine among them. "And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another. Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God, that I should be the Minister of Jesus Christ unto the Gentiles<sup>a</sup>."

BUT though the power of Ordination belongs, not to any Community at large, but to Ministers of the Gospel, yet that power these ought always to exercise for the good of the people. God has given them authority, not for destruction, but for edification. They should never act as lords over God's heritage; but endeavour to find out faithful men able to teach others also, to whom they may commit the office which they themselves have received<sup>c</sup>. Did any man not wait on his Ministry, or teach doctrines contrary to the first principles of Christianity, the people certainly would be justified, in withdrawing from his Ministrations. In that case, they ought to submit to other pastors, whom they find set apart to their office according to the rule which Christ has given. If they either withdraw without sufficient reason, or follow any novel unscriptural plan of their own, their secession can be no other than schism; and may be viewed as proceeding from that spirit of disorder, which is likely to produce consequences, fatal to the peace of the Church, and of Society at large.

THAT many public Teachers have abused their authority, is a lamentable truth, of which we have the fullest docu-

<sup>a</sup> Rom. xv. 14,—16.

<sup>c</sup> 2 Tim. ii. 2.

ments. The Scripture itself had foretold it. Said Paul to the Elders of Ephesus, "Of yourselves shall men arise speaking perverse things, to draw disciples after them<sup>k</sup>." The same Apostle, however, gives us to understand, that another extreme is equally to be dreaded, on the part of the people; when become incapable of controul, (they shall not endure sound doctrine, but shall heap up to themselves Teachers, having itching ears)<sup>l</sup>. But whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, it becomes those entrusted with the Ministry of Reconciliation, to speak the things which become sound doctrine; to refute error, and to inculcate truth and duty, with all authority. In an age, especially, of licentiousness and innovation, they should not for a moment yield to those, who would sow dissension and division among them. Deceivers will often assume an appearance of uncommon sanctity; and will thereby either intrude into the Church, or otherwise impose upon the simple. But surely we run the least risk of being deceived, and can never in the end miscarry, while we observe that order which Christ himself has appointed.

#### SECTION VIII.

*Continuation of the same Subject—Diversity of ordinary offices appointed in the Church.*

THE very idea of a Stated Ministry, whose gifts have been approved by other Teachers, and who by them have been solemnly set apart to their office, supposes that others are not of their own accord to enter upon the discharge of the duties, which have been committed to the former. This is a point so obvious, that it seems to baffle illustration.

<sup>k</sup> Acts xx. 30.

<sup>l</sup> 2 Tim. iv. 3.



Were every man who thinks himself effectually called by the grace of God, or who may be esteemed so by others, permitted publicly to expound Scripture, which is the most important part of Ministerial work, then it is evident that Ordination, by the laying on of the hands of a Presbytery, and by solemn prayer, is entirely a matter of indifference. But if a matter of indifference, it follows that it is no institution of Christ; for his disciples ought to observe all things which he has commanded. Again, if it be not an institution of Christ, the observance of it must be displeasing to him; and must be calculated to confine the public exercise of gifts, within much narrower limits than He intended.

ACCORDINGLY, this very complaint we find instituted by the Patrons of Lay-Preaching against the former practice of the Church. They allow every Christian to take upon him the office of an Itinerant; and these Itinerants they consider eligible as Pastors by any Congregation. They therefore admit something like a standing Ministry. At the same time, they view the whole Congregation as *priests* to God, in that sense which may authorize them publicly to assist their Pastor in his work; that *all* may speak, and that *all* may be edified. \*

THAT every man may, in his ordinary intercourse with Society, occasionally, administer advice and plainer instruction to his neighbour, is what no sensible Advocate for a Regular Ministry will be disposed to deny. On the contrary, they will urge it as their duty. Christians ought to teach and admonish one another in psalms and hymns. They should speak of the word of God in the house and by the way. Nay; even women who are not permitted to teach in public, nor

\* Missionary Magazine, Vol. II. pages 319, 320. and Vol. III. page 72. See also page 159.

even in private, in presence of their husbands <sup>a</sup>, are commanded to be *Teachers* of good things. They ought to teach those of their own sex who are younger than themselves, and to instruct their children in the plainer truths of the Gospel, as far as they themselves do clearly understand them <sup>b</sup>. But is there any person who does not perceive, that such offices are very different from that public and more enlarged exercise of gifts, which is appointed for the edification of any Christian Society, or of mankind in general? Though the Apostles exhorted all to teach and admonish one another, yet when speaking of a *public office*, they say, "Are all Prophets? Are all Teachers <sup>c</sup>?" and again, "My brethren, be *not* many Teachers." \* "The things which thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be *able* to teach others also <sup>d</sup>."

WHAT puts this point beyond all disputation is, that even

<sup>a</sup> 1 Tim. ii. 12.    <sup>b</sup> Tit. ii. 3, 4.    <sup>c</sup> 1 Cor. xii. 29.    <sup>d</sup> 2 Tim. ii. 2.

\* These words of Scripture, are in our Version rendered, "Be not many Masters," James iii. 1. But they can have no other meaning than that which I have given above, "Be not many teachers." The words are a caution to both those who aspire after the office of a Public Teacher, and those who have power to ordain to it. I may remark, that in Old English the term Master did properly signify a Teacher; and that such is its meaning in many parts of the New Testament. The same meaning it seems sometimes to have at this day; as Master of Arts, a person found qualified to teach the Arts and Sciences. In Scotland, the term seems long to have been *peculiarly* applied to a Minister of the Gospel: So that when prefixed to any name, it was another appellation for the Minister of a Parish. It was, however, expressive not of compliment, but of official character. When, therefore, in certain papers published with our Confession of Faith, the Moderator of an Assembly designs himself, "Mr. Th. Henderson," it implies no more vanity than the Subscription of the Clerk of the Scotch Parliament, "A. Gibson, Cler. Registri." It was when the term Master had lost some of its primary import, that the Diploma of an University came, in the courtesy of the country, but contrary to the design of the Church, to confer a higher title than the ordination of a Presbytery.

some who held a public office in the Church, were not thereby authorized or supposed qualified to teach in the Christian Assemblies. He who ministered was required to wait on his ministering<sup>e</sup>; as well as he who taught on teaching.

IN the earlier Epistles of Paul, we find mentioned a variety of persons, possessing extraordinary gifts, who were employed as Pastors of a particular Church. So much was this the case at Corinth, that the variety of their gifts occasioned an improper emulation, in those who possessed them. Every one had a psalm, had a doctrine, had a tongue, had a revelation, had an interpretation.—The Apostle Paul shews that all these gifts were useful, and ought to be employed for the good of the Christian Society at large; and that those who possessed the *lower* ought to aspire at the higher. “I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he who prophesieth than he who speaketh with tongues, except he *interpret*, that the Church may receive edifying<sup>f</sup>.” The supposed necessity of *interpretation*, in the case of *all* speaking with tongues, shews that the Apostle has here in view, not the whole Society, but its Office-bearers, already possessing a portion of extraordinary gifts.

WHILE so many Ministers of the word officiated in one Society, we may believe, that different parts of the Service would be assigned them. To one was given the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge. The one probably consisted in that, I may say, inspired interpretation of Scripture, which was competent for Apostles and Prophets; and in that close application of it to the hearts of men, which might convince them, that God was in the speaker of a truth<sup>g</sup>. The other in that less impressive de-

<sup>e</sup> Rom. xii. 7.

<sup>f</sup> 1 Cor. xiv. 26.

<sup>g</sup> 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25.



lineation of truth, which was acquired in the use of means, and was competent for more ordinary Teachers. \* With respect to those who possessed the latter gift, some seem to have been endued with the gift of tongues, others not. Nay; it appears that some could speak in one unknown tongue, for the sake of some strangers who were present, but could not interpret what he said in another, for the sake of others. It seems to be of these the Apostle says, "If any man speak (that is, "whosoever speaks) in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret. But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the Church; and let him speak to himself and to God." Such was the part of some who had only the word of knowledge. The Apostle subjoins with respect to those, who, whether they had the gift of tongues or not, were possessed of higher inspired gifts,

\* When Paul, in his Epistle to the Ephesians, iv. 11. speaks of Pastors and Teachers, perhaps he meant to state the same distinction which subsisted between Prophet and Teacher in his Epistle to the Corinthians; the Prophet being a more distinguished Teacher, and therefore styled Pastor by way of eminence. They were not different offices, but different degrees of the same office. Both might come up to the description of the character of a Bishop, which Paul afterwards gives: and when the one failed, the other would succeed in the discharge of the higher parts of ministerial work. Let it not be objected, that in Ephes. iv. 11. *Prophets* are mentioned as distinct from both *Pastors* and *Teachers*. There the term Prophet has obviously a different meaning from what it has 1 Cor. xiv. In the one it signifies an inferior Apostle, or superior Evangelist, as Silas and Judas, Acts xv. 32; in the other, a more eminent Pastor attached to a particular Congregation.

But whether Paul meant a distinction to subsist between Pastor and Teacher, it is perfectly agreeable to the tenour of Scripture to entrust to men a portion of ministerial work, who may not be qualified for the full discharge of the Pastoral office. In the Apostolic Churches, the Teachers as well as the taught, ever needed new instruction from Apostles or Evangelists. The Scotch idea, therefore, of a Doctor or Catechist, is what the circumstances of times may render necessary. Only the inferior office ought to be subject to the same jurisdiction as the higher; and ought only the more carefully to be inspected, that its powers are contracted.

"Let the Prophets speak two or three, and let the others (other prophets) judge. If any thing be revealed to another (prophet) that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. For ye may all prophesy (who are prophets) one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted."

THUS it appears there were two kinds of Pastors, who officiated in the Church at Corinth, denominated by Paul Teachers and Prophets. The latter are said to speak, that all may be *comforted*.

EVERY just and full delineation of Evangelical truth, has a tendency to comfort the mind, and to direct the practice. But those who explained the higher mysteries of faith, and who seem to have concluded the service in the Christian Church, more immediately adapt their discourses to those purposes. In another part of his writings, however, Paul mentions this as something distinct from the mere exercise of Prophecy; from which it appears that even some who prophesied, left a part of service to one who succeeded them. "Having then gifts, differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the tenour of the Faith—he who teacheth, let him wait on his teaching; or he who exhorteth on exhortation<sup>a</sup>.

THE term rendered "exhort," signifies either to *exhort* or to *comfort*. Sometimes, perhaps, to *remind*, or to suggest inferences, resulting from known truth, to which we had not attended. Accordingly, in some parts of the New Testament, it has a meaning much superior to that of giving advice to our neighbour. It seems to denote the highest part of ministerial duty. It was the part of him, who, leaving the first principles of the Oracles of God, led forward

<sup>a</sup> Rom. xii. 6,—8.

his hearers to perfection. Hence to *exhort by sound doctrine* is mentioned as the complete duty of a Pastor or Bishop, as far as respects the edification of his people\*.

It is probable, that this term had received an *appropriated* meaning, above its ordinary one, in the Jewish Synagogue, and that thence it was transferred into the Christian Church. Agreeably to this, we find that, after the reading of the Law and Prophets, in a certain Synagogue, the Rulers requested Paul and Barnabas, who had taken their seats among the Doctors, to give a "word (or discourse) of *Exhortation*"<sup>b</sup>. It is not to be thought, but this was esteemed the more honourable part of the Service, which, in token of respect, was put upon those learned strangers. These therefore would be expected to give the people any farther instruction which they thought necessary, or to recal to their minds what they had heard, with additional illustration. Many, perhaps, will be inclined to think that it is in allusion to this the Holy Spirit is styled by our Saviour, "The Comforter," or, if I may use the expression, Perfecting Instructor. Jesus had taught his disciples the elementary parts of doctrine; but it was the office of that Divine Agent to finish their education for the Ministry, or to apply the truths which had been taught them, for their own edification and comfort. Certain it is, that the description which is given of the character of the Holy Spirit as a Comforter, does not so immediately relate to *comfort*, as to the *perfect illumination* of the mind. Said Christ to his disciples whom

<sup>b</sup> Acts xiii. 15.

\* These words we find, Tit. 1. 9. They are improperly rendered in our Version, "that he may be able by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers." The words in their natural order run, "that he may be able both to *exhort* by sound Doctrine, and to convince the gainsayers." The first member of the sentence refers to the edification of Christians, the second to the silencing of their enemies. The same seems to be the meaning of the term in Acts xv. 32.



he promised not to leave without a guide, "The Comforter, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you<sup>c</sup>;" and again, "When the Comforter is come, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall *testify* of me<sup>d</sup>. — "He will convince the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment<sup>e</sup>." And again, "I have *yet* many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when he the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into *all truth*: for he shall not *speak* of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will *shew* you things to come<sup>f</sup>."

FROM what has been said, we may learn, what were the offices of the Pastors in the Apostolic Churches, as Teacher Prophet, and Exhorter. The first explained the first principles of doctrine; the second the higher mysteries of faith; while the third, being the more eminent Prophet, recapitulated the sum of what had been said, supplied what was deficient in the illustration, and pressed home the truth, in its practical influence, upon the mind.\* How important

<sup>c</sup> John xiv. 26.    <sup>d</sup> John xv. 26.    <sup>e</sup> John xvi. 8.    <sup>f</sup> John xvi. 12, 13.

\* The Christian Ministry was, no doubt, superior to the Jewish, and the instruction committed to the former, might be styled *exhortation*, in the sense which has been affixed to that term, when compared with that which was given by the latter. This may explain the words of Paul to the Hebrews, x. 25. "Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, but *exhorting*,"—as the words elliptically stand. The words "assembling," in the original language, is not *συναγωγή*, but *ἐκσυναγωγή*, as it were, an *additional* meeting as a Synagogue or Congregation. As the Hebrews met with their countrymen for Jewish worship, so they were required, in addition to that, to meet for Christian edification. The Apostle therefore exhorts them not to leave off this assembling of themselves, because they had previously met in the Jewish Synagogue; but on the contrary, to *administer* that *more perfect instruction* which the Gospel enabled them. He mentions the duty of Pastors, supposing that it was in consequence of their neglect, the people were deficient in theirs. The former, indeed, would be under strong temptations to

must the work of the Ministry have appeared to God, when he raised up so many men, of diversified gifts, for the edification and establishment of those who had embraced the Gospel! How pernicious must any system be, which has the most remote tendency to diminish the influence of that

satisfy themselves with the public worship of the Synagogue, and then to confine to their own families the duties peculiar to them as Christians. Any Scribe or man of eminence, who embraced the Gospel, was marked and persecuted by his countrymen, John vii. 48—The Apostle Peter writing to the same persons as Paul now does, beseeches the Elders cheerfully to *take* upon them the oversight of the flock. 1 Pet. v. 1, 2.

It is remarkable that Paul styles his Epistle to the Hebrews a word, or discourse of Exhortation, xiii. 22. Not being an Apostle to them, he appears only as a more eminent Pastor, who addresses them on those points which concerned their common salvation. He proposes no new point of doctrine, nor puts order to any thing which was wanting in the constitution of their Churches. But he more fully illustrates, and presses home upon the mind, those truths which they already believed. His design might be so far to diminish their reverence for the ceremonial law; but his more apparent object is, to point out the excellence of the Gospel. In the course of this Sermon, indeed, or, if you will, Pastoral Admonition, he stops to explain some first principles; but this he does in the right of a *Teacher*, not under the professed authority of an Apostle or Evangelist. When speaking of Melchizedec's priesthood as a pattern of our Lord's, he says, Chap. v. 11, 12. "Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be explained, (*δοξασαντες υμεις*) seeing ye are dull of hearing. For when for the time ye ought to be Teachers," that is, when your own Teachers should possess every qualification suited to that character, and be able themselves to explain every difficult point of doctrine, and when even parents should be able, in a more familiar manner, to explain them to their children, "ye have need that one teach which be the first principles of the Oracles of God."

I do not doubt, that Paul, when occasionally visiting some Hebrew Church, pronounced to them that discourse, and that, afterwards, for the sake of others, he committed it to writing. Some expressions are better suited to a Speaker, than to a Writer, "For the time would fail me to tell, &c." Indeed the general style of the first twelve chapters, which form a kind of whole, rather resembles that of one addressing an Assembly, than that of one more coolly writing in his closet.—The reader may consider, what an effect, even in point of eloquence, such a discourse would produce, as falling from the lips of the Apostle Paul! See Chap. v. 11. ix. 5. and xi. 32.

Ministry, as a Divine Ordinance, or to render it unnecessary in the view of mankind !

BUT though such was the diversity of gifts in the Churches, as planted by the Apostles, yet we learn from the later epistles of Paul, what those administrations or offices were, which are to continue. They are those of Bishop and Deacon. Thus the Epistle to the Philippians is directed to the "Saints at Philippi, with the Bishops and Deacons."

THE term Deacon properly means, an honorary Servant or Minister, who manages a trust for the behoof of others. In this sense it is applied, even to the highest office-bearers in the Christian Church. But as here distinguished from Bishop or Overseer, it seems to denote an inferior Minister, over whom the former, perhaps, had an oversight. A distinction subsists between them. What that distinction is, will not be so properly understood from the names themselves, as from the particular description of the characters which the Apostle has given <sup>b</sup>.

"IF a man desire the office of a Bishop, he desireth a good work. A Bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, given to hospitality, *apt to teach*—one who ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity: For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God." Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must have a good report of them who are without, lest he fall into reproach and the condemnation of the devil. *Likewise* must the Deacons be grave, not double-tongued, not given to

<sup>b</sup> 1 Tim. iii. 1—13.



much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre: Holding \* the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a Deacon, being found blameless—Let the Deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For they who have used the office of a Deacon well, purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the Faith which is in Christ Jesus."

HERE it is evident, that while the care of the Church is peculiarly ascribed to him who is styled a Bishop, so to him only is said to belong the office of public teaching. He must be *apt* (or able) *to teach*." But for the person styled Deacon, it is enough, that he hold the faith in a pure conscience. Thus the object of the Apostles was not to find persons, who might amuse their hearers, but who had knowledge sufficient distinctly to state, and duly to apply the doctrines of the Gospel. But if *ability* to teach be mentioned as a qualification of the higher Minister in the Church, as distinguished from the lower, the reader may judge whether the whole Assembly were supposed qualified to edify one another.

WHEREIN this ability to teach did consist, we learn from another of Paul's Epistles. "A Bishop must be one who holds fast † (in opposition to adversaries) the faithful word in his doctrine, that he may be able both to exhort by sound doctrine, and to convince the gainfayers<sup>c</sup>." Such is the high character which he ought to possess, who is invested with the office of a Bishop or Pastor in any Christian Society. He must be able not only to propound the truth for the edification of his hearers, but to refute every error or objection that might be started. Set up for the defence of the gospel,

<sup>c</sup> Tit. i. 9.

\* *ἰχθὺς* † *ἀντὶς ἰχθὺς*.

he should be able not only to feed his people with the pure milk of the word, but to vindicate the cause of Christ against every adversary. As he should be well acquainted with the doctrines and evidences of Christianity, before he be invested with such an office, so afterwards he should give himself wholly to his work. Said Paul to Timothy, "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery. Meditate upon these things, give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear unto all<sup>k</sup>. The Servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient. In meekness instructing those who oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth<sup>l</sup>."

It farther appeared from the words of Paul, that the government of the Church was entrusted to those who sustained the name of Bishop. Accordingly, they are styled not only Pastors, Overseers, and Teachers, but *Elders*; a name which almost solely refers to Government. We may therefore believe, that they not only expounded Scripture and administered the Sacraments, but reproved vice, and determined every thing necessary for the good order of the Church, according to the rule which the Apostles had given. This seems *officially* to have belonged to them. When Paul had called to him the Elders of Ephesus, he exhorted them to feed the Church of God, and to take heed to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost had made them Overseers.—In the same manner he exhorts the people, "Remember them who have the rule over you, who have spoken to you the word of God. Obey them who have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they who must give an account<sup>l</sup>." To the same purport are the words of Peter, "The Elders who are among you, I exhort,

<sup>i</sup> 1 Tim. iv. 14—16.

<sup>k</sup> 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25.

<sup>l</sup> Heb. xiii. 7. & 17

who am also an Elder: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind: Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock<sup>m</sup>.

WHAT were the duties assigned to the Deacons or other public Ministers of the Church, is, perhaps, more difficult to determine, than may at first sight appear. The term may sometimes be applied to persons, who, without any office, did acts of kindness to the saints. But as mentioned by Paul in his Epistle to Timothy, it obviously denotes a person sustaining a public office or trust: for men must be *approved*\* before they be entrusted with it. It is not said, however, whether they were Ministers of charity, whom *we* call Deacons, or entrusted with any other part of public work. Did we judge from analogy, we might suppose that they sustained nearly the same relation to the Pastors or Bishops, which some inferior Ministers whom the Apostles carried with them sustained to them. If so, it may be thought, that although they did not teach in public, they might not only be employed more privately, in catechising the young and ignorant, but might assist the Pastors in inspecting the morals of the flock, and in administering the Sacraments.

It is probable that our Translators of the Bible, who were Episcopalians in principle, considered the Deacons as corresponding to an order in the English Church, bearing that name, who were ultimately intended for the ministry of the word. That such might be the case with some of them, I see no reason to deny. Nothing was more natural than that men who wished to serve the Church, in a higher capacity, should first serve her in a lower. Some may consider this as implied in the words of Paul, "that they who

<sup>m</sup> 1 Pet. v. 1—3.

\* δοκιμαζομενοι.



use the office of a Deacon well purchase to themselves a good *degree*;" by which may be meant a step to a higher office. In that age of simplicity and purity, it might be supposed that several persons would be led by zeal, to dedicate themselves to the particular study of the Scriptures; and that, in the mean time, while they regularly waited on the instructions of the Pastors, they were willing to promote the good of the Christian Community, in any capacity which it was competent for them to assume. However it was, they were required to wait on their ministering, as much as the Pastor was on his teaching. Their work is distinguished from *public* speaking in every form. Both offices Peter seems to have in view when he says<sup>n</sup>, "Let every man, as he hath received the gift, minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. Whosoever *speaks*, let him speak as the oracles of God. Whosoever *ministers*, let him minister as of the ability which God giveth \*."

THAT the Government of the Church, is peculiarly ascribed to those who speak the word, is abundantly obvious. The reason for which it may be so, perhaps, is, that Government did chiefly consist in public reproof and admonition, which we find it was competent for the Pastor only to give; and that they only possessed the power of ordination. But though the name Elder be given, by way of eminence, to the latter, it seems also to have been extended to other Ministers. "The Elders who rule well," says Paul, "count worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in word and doctrine °."

<sup>n</sup> 1 Pet. iv. 10, 11.

<sup>o</sup> 1 Tim. v. 17.

\* These words are in our version rendered, "As every man has received the gift:" From which the friends of Lay-Preaching infer that *all taught or exhorted* in the Christian assemblies. But the words naturally run, "Let every man, as he hath received the gift, &c." The latter clause restricts the meaning of the former, and shews whom the Apostle has in view. The term "gift" frequently signifies *mental endowments*, as either conferred, or approved and tried, with a view to the discharge of a *public office*. In this sense it is used

Indeed, the very power of administering public charity, supposes a certain right of governing. The persons who did so, were required to judge of the characters and circumstances of those, who received the money of the Church, and no doubt to administer to them suitable advice, respecting the sobriety of their behaviour.

How much ability and information were required in him, whose office it was to expound Scripture, and apply it by reproof or admonition to men, must appear from what has been already said. It has also been shewn, that they could be ordained to their office by none but Ministers of the word.—

by Paul, when he says to Timothy, "Neglect not the *gift* that is in thee, which was given thee through prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery," 1 Tim. iv. 14. "Stir up the *gift* of God, which is in thee, through the laying on of my hands," 2 Tim. i. 6. The word *Grace* has sometimes the same meaning, "I according to the *grace* given me, as a wise Master-builder, have laid the foundation," 1 Cor. iii. 10. "I have written to you the more boldly, as putting you in remembrance, through the *grace* given to me of God, that I should be the *Minister* of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles," Rom. xv. 15, 16.

Much stress has farther been laid on the words rendered in our version, "If any man speak." From this the Patrons of Lay-Preaching also infer, that all who choose may speak in public. Upon the same principle they should assert, that all who *choose* may take upon them the distribution and management of the public money of the Church: for it is also said, "If *any* man *minister*." But by the stress which these gentlemen lay on the word "any," as connected with the insignificant particle "If," they make the Apostle teach a very different doctrine from what they perhaps intend. Instead of making him say that *all* would speak, they make him express a doubt whether *any* would speak, and insinuate, that the first Christians, like the Quakers, in modern times, might sometimes have *silent* assemblies. Extremes, it is said, sometimes meet. There is often a very close co-incidence, in point of time, between much *clameur* and profound silence.—There are many forms of expression, which are understood in one language, but which become obscure when *verbally* rendered into another. The Apostle's meaning obviously is, "Whoever speaks, &c. Whoever ministers, &c." that is, *statedly*, in consequence of having received the office, with which those services are connected.

If therefore teaching, in a more limited form, was committed to any, it must have been in subordination to the same authority. Accordingly, though the Church of Scotland admits of a Teacher, inferior to a Pastor, such as Schoolmaster or Catechist, yet she has from the beginning put the trial of their gifts under the authority of her Presbyteries. Their office has been to teach the elementary parts of faith, to the young or ignorant, according to a form of sound words which was prescribed to them. As our Parish schools are a public blessing, so many other Catechists have, especially in the Highlands, been singularly useful. They are not, however, Lay-Preachers, as the advocates for that doctrine wish us to believe. They are an order acknowledged by the Church of Scotland since the Reformation. They are Ecclesiastics. They possess *delegated* but *limited* authority.\*

So strange has been the inattention paid to Schoolmasters, that many seem to have forgot that they are Ecclesiastical characters. Owing to this it may be that even public Office-bearers in the Church, not knowing, it appears, what they had subscribed, and solemnly promised to maintain, do, without consulting the Minister of the Parish, not to say the Presbytery of the bounds, take upon them the office of Catechists—that in their schools they not only provide accommodation for a Congregation, but by means of their friends privately invite them to attend—that they not only catechise, but particularly expound the Scripture—that they serve alternately with men who more avowedly assume the character of Lay-Preachers—and that when informed that a Minister of the Church of Scotland cannot countenance them, upon that system, they continue the plan which they had formed to themselves, whatever dissension it may occasion among his people. When Sabbath Schools are under proper regulations, they will prove useful institutions. But when con-

\* Sec II. Book of Policy—Of Doctors and their office, &c.



ducted by strangers, on their own plans, they may generally be viewed as the forerunners of innovation.

## SECTION IX.

*Government of the Primitive Church compared with that of the Jewish state—Association of Churches.*

HAVING considered the nature of that authority, given to the Ministry for the instruction of mankind, and for the maintenance of good order; it may be proper to inquire, in what respect the Government of the Christian Church, resembled that which was established in the Jewish. This may explain several things in the conduct of the Church at Jerusalem; as well as enable us to ascertain, those general principles which Christians ought to have in view, in settling the Constitution of their Churches.

It may be premised, however, that the Christian Dispensation is, in every respect, superior to that appointed by Moses. The persons who acted as public Teachers in the one, were not supposed to be thereby qualified, to discharge the duties belonging to the Ministry in the other. Though Paul was authorized to teach in the Synagogue, yet by the command of God, he received Ordination from a Minister of the Gospel, before he spake in the name of Jesus. The *laying on of hands*, which by Moses was employed in consecrating the most eminent persons to their office<sup>a</sup>, was by the Apostles extended to every public office-bearer in the Church. It follows, that though superior light has now been introduced among men, yet the office of the Ministry be-

<sup>a</sup> Deut. xxxiv. 9.

comes only more sacred ; and that it is only by the blessing of God accompanying this his Ordinance, that the truth can be expected to prevail over error and impiety. “ The Lord will purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer to him an offering in righteousness, and that the offering of Judah and Jerusalem may be pleasant unto him, as in the days of old <sup>b</sup>. ”

As Moses was sent in the character of a Prophet, to the Israelites, so he was commanded to join in this mission, his brother Aaron with the Elders of the people or Princes of the tribes <sup>c</sup>: And, by the advice of Jethro, with the Divine approbation, he appointed a variety of other Rulers, \* who were to decide every less momentous cause, and to bring the more difficult to himself <sup>d</sup>. Afterwards, by the command of God, he selected from among those Rulers, Seventy to wait before the Tabernacle, and to assist himself in determining such questions as were brought to him by the former <sup>e</sup>. Those Seventy, together with the High Priest, the Judge or King, whom God set over his people, formed a Court which subsisted till the dissolution of their State, and judged of the doctrine of every

<sup>b</sup> Mal. iii. 3, 4.

<sup>c</sup> Exod. iii. 16. and iv. 14.

<sup>d</sup> Exod. xviii. 19—26.

<sup>e</sup> Num. xi. 16, 17.

\* Though so many Rulers were appointed, yet the Princes of the tribes are said to have possessed a superiority over them, Numb. vii. 2. It is difficult to ascertain from Scripture, whether the latter were included in the Seventy, who were afterwards chosen. But however it was, they formed a constituent part of the Sanhedrim. They are often mentioned as distinct from the Elders. When Moses says on one occasion, “ Gather unto me your Elders, &c. ” The Seventy Interpreters paraphrase his words, “ the Rulers of your tribes and your Elders, ” Deut. xxxi. 28.—The Reader will perceive with how little propriety Jehoshaphat’s sending of his Princes, to teach in the cities of Judah, is adduced as a proof for the lawfulness of Lay-Preaching, 2 Chron. xvii. 7—9, and xix. 5—11. It is a proof that none attempted, but those to whom it *officially* belonged, to instruct the people. The same we find take place at a later period of the Jewish history. Nehem. viii. 4—8. and 13—15.

Prophet who appeared in the land. The manner of their consecration was highly solemn. "The Lord came down in a cloud, and took of the Spirit that was upon Moses, and put it upon the Seventy Elders; and it came to pass, when the Spirit rested upon them, they *prophefied*, and ceased not <sup>f</sup>."

It farther deserves notice, that the Levites were ordained to bless and instruct the people, as well as to offer sacrifice. "The Priest's lips shall keep knowledge, and they shall learn the Law at his mouth." They shall teach Jacob thy Judgments, and Israel thy Law <sup>g</sup>." With the Priests was deposited the Book of the Law which Moses had written. They were therefore required not only to instruct those who occasionally resorted to them, but every seventh year to assemble all the tribes of Israel; to whom they, with the Elders, read the Law, and caused them to understand its meaning <sup>h</sup>.

Thus it appears that, although the Israelites were a nation of Priests to God <sup>i</sup>, yet they needed men *officially* set apart to instruct them. These were the persons who taught, "every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord;" and who enabled them to distinguish the true God from the idols of the Heathen. Hence it arose that, in every period of their history, the example of the Priests, and especially of the Elders, had the greatest influence on the manners of the people; and that the one often changed their mode of worship, as the other directed them. On this account God often found it necessary, to raise up extraordinary Judges or Prophets, to reform the Teachers, as well as the taught. No man, however, ran unsent; or refused to exhibit, when required, sufficient evidence of the Mission which he had received.

<sup>f</sup> Num. xi. 25.

<sup>g</sup> Mal. ii. 7. Deut. xxxiii. 10.

<sup>h</sup> Deut. xxxi. 9—13.

<sup>i</sup> Exod. xix. 6.



IN order to qualify the Rulers and the Levites for their office, Moses often instructed them in private<sup>k</sup>. In the earliest times Schools of the Prophets were erected.\* These were attended not only by the Sons of the Levites and Rulers, but by such others, as their Parents dedicated to the service of God<sup>l</sup>. In the same manner, so late as the time of our Saviour, there were many learned Doctors, who trained up such young men as became their disciples; and their Schools were resorted to, by Jews from distant countries<sup>m</sup>.

FROM those Schools, then, were furnished Scribes who read the Law in the Synagogue, as well as Judges who governed the people, and assisted the former in the discharge of their duty. As they read the Law, so when any of them had a word of exhortation, they delivered it at the conclu-

<sup>k</sup> Exod. xix. 7. Chap. xxiv. 1. Num. xxx. 1. Deut. xxxi. 28.

<sup>l</sup> 1 Sam. i. 28. <sup>m</sup> Acts xxii. 3.

\* The learning of the Israelites was, no doubt, at first, very limited: Though Moses would transmit to them that which he himself had received from the Egyptians. By the time of Solomon, the improvements which they made, were very considerable. What the state of learning was among the Jews, after the time of Ezra, we may form an opinion from the Version of their Scriptures, which the seventy-two Elders gave, at the request of Ptolemy Philadelphus: a version which is most frequently quoted by the Apostles themselves, and which will be held in repute, as long as any regard shall be paid to Sacred Literature. Again, in the last period of the Jewish state, Paul exhibits a specimen of that learning, in which others would, at least, rival him. The piety of the Scribes, however, was now become very low. But to this there were, no doubt, many exceptions. As several scribes believed in Christ, so many in Galilee admitted him to teach in their Synagogues. Of those who were dispersed in other countries, not a few submitted to the Gospel. The Scribes at Berea seem to have agreed to examine Paul's doctrine, by the Scriptures of the Prophets; but were interrupted by the tumults, which the people raised against them.—It may be farther observed, that all the learning of the Jews had some relation to the public service of the Church. This farther renders it certain that Apollos was a Scribe. It may be, indeed, inferred, that he was not only a Scribe, but one of the more eminent of that profession, "mighty in the Scriptures."

sion of the service. The Scribes in every Synagogue, are farther said to have taken care of the poor. But this office in the *temple*, did more properly belong to the High Priest or Sanhedrim<sup>n</sup>. It is remarkable that no one among them began publicly to teach, till arrived at the age of thirty years<sup>o</sup>. At this period of life, both John the Baptist and our Saviour, began their Ministry. As the former was the son of a Priest, and had, no doubt, received that education which was approved by his country, so the Sanhedrim did not question his authority to teach: Only as he appeared in a higher character than that of an ordinary Scribe, they sent Priests and Levites from Jerusalem, to inquire whom he professed himself to be<sup>p</sup>. They put a different question to our Saviour, when he entered on his Ministry. Their error was in not receiving the miracles which he wrought, as sufficient credentials of that authority by which he spake.

It has been said, that no Teacher in ancient Israel, was, on his embracing the Gospel, permitted, of his own accord, to enter upon the office of the Christian Ministry. All received from the Apostles or others a new commission; and had committed to them the doctrine which they were to teach<sup>q</sup>. At the same time it was natural for men, who formerly had been invested with the full authority of Teachers, sometimes to go beyond the commission which they received. This was a plentiful source of confusion. Some Pharisees from Jerusalem, had taught the brethren at Antioch, to keep the law of Moses: But the Apostles and Elders mention their conduct, with *pointed* disapprobation.

As the Twelve Apostles corresponded to the Heads of the Tribes of Israel, so they possessed an authority over other

<sup>n</sup> Matth xxvii. 6.    <sup>o</sup> Num. iv. 3. 1 Chron. xxiii. 3.    <sup>p</sup> John i. 19.  
<sup>q</sup> Acts ii. 42.

Ministers of the Gospel, similar to that which the Twelve Princes seem at first to have possessed, over others whom Moses enrolled as Judges in Israel. Whether the Seventy, whom our Saviour himself, while on earth, nominated to the Ministry, rose to a rank above ordinary Pastors, is a point which deserves consideration.

It is not unworthy of a Divine Teacher, to humour the prejudices of mankind, in matters that are circumstantial. This our Saviour did in the very number of the persons whom, at different times, he sent forth to preach the Gospel. Nor was this the less worthy of him, as thereby he shewed a respect to a previous revelation of the Divine will. But if he shewed respect to the Mosaic Economy, while he remained on earth, it was to be expected that he would do the same, after he ascended into heaven; and that the Seventy Disciples would rise to the same eminence in his Church, to which the Seventy Elders rose in the Church of Israel: Their exalted character as Evangelists or Prophets, would be highly useful for the first establishment of Christianity.

THE account which Luke gives of the Church at Jerusalem, after the conversion of Paul, is far from being circumstantial. It will therefore be necessary to compare the few hints which he gives, with the general analogy of the Apostolic History, in order to ascertain the truth of what has been now asserted.

ONE thing appears fully evident, that the Ministry of the Seventy, like that of the Twelve Apostles, was directed to the Jewish nation. None but Grecians or Greeks seem for many years to have preached the Gospel to the Heathen. It is remarkable that several, who accompanied Paul to the Western parts of the Roman Empire, did afterwards go to the East. This was probably done by Barnabas. Peter,



when writing from Babylon to the Western Churches, mentions Silvanus and Mark as there present with him <sup>r</sup>.

It may farther be deduced from Scripture history, that the Seventy Disciples did severally accompany the Apostles, as *joint* witnesses of the Resurrection. *Six* of them are said to have accompanied Peter to Cefarea <sup>a</sup>. If as many attended each of the other Apostles, in visiting the Churches of Judea, those would make up what was their real number, *Seventy-two*.

WHEN we consider the history of Paul, we find that every inferior Minister who accompanied him, rose to a superiority over ordinary Pastors. Some of them have written histories of our Saviour's life, which Christians, in every age, have received as inspired. All of them Paul occasionally employed in watering the Churches, or in putting to order the things which were wanting. Some he even associated as joint writers of those Epistles, which still remain as monuments of the doctrines of the Gospel. This was more likely to take place with those who attended the Jewish Apostles. As by their believing countrymen they would be regarded, as antitypes of the Seventy, on whom the Spirit of God had rested in the wilderness, so they had not only seen Christ alive after his passion, but accompanied him in the greater part of his Ministry on earth; circumstances which were esteemed of much importance, in every Minister of the Gospel <sup>b</sup>.

BUT while it may be viewed as certain that those men came, in process of time, to assist the Apostles, in the higher parts of their duty, it is equally certain, that this was not the case with every Minister of the Word. Had all been able, in every point, to announce the will of the

<sup>r</sup> 1 Pet. v. 12, 13.

<sup>a</sup> Acts xi. 12, and x. 41.

<sup>b</sup> 1 Cor. ix. 1.

Holy Spirit, there could have been no necessity for the Church at Antioch, to refer a matter to the Apostles and Elders at Jerusalem. Might not the Prophets and Teachers, who were in the former city, have determined it themselves with equal propriety? But did not the very error of those who came from Jerusalem, shew that all entrusted with ministerial work, were not able, in the first instance, to settle those points of faith or of practice, which were to remain in the Church? Did not the same take place in every Church of the Gentiles? Did not the Prophets who were at Corinth, in many things, apply for advice to the Apostle Paul? Nay; though there were men possessing a portion of extraordinary gifts, in almost every Church, did not that Apostle find it necessary, more than once, either to visit them himself, or to send Evangelists, "to put to order the things which were wanting."

THESE observations may enable us to ascertain a fact, which does not seem to have been attended to, that the Elders who, along with the Apostles, determined the disputed point which was brought up from Antioch, could not be all the Ministers of the Gospel at Jerusalem, much less the collective body of the Saints; but those inferior witnesses of the Resurrection, \* who accompanied the Apostles in the character of Evangelists, and acted as their vicegerents in their absence. The name of Elders would naturally be given to them, in allusion to the Jewish Sanhedrim, before it was extended to every Minister of the Gospel, or other office-bearers in the Church.

\* It is not contended, that no other rose to this rank in the Jewish Church; but that the Seventy, who, *for certain*, had seen Christ, after his Resurrection, had a preference. Such persons Paul mentions, as receiving the Gospel in common with the Apostles, Eph. iii. 5. "which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it is *now* revealed unto his holy *Apostles* and *Prophets* by the Spirit." The same, probably, is the meaning of the term *Prophet*, Eph. ii. 20, as it is Chap. iv. 11.

BUT as this is supported by the analogy of Scripture history, so it is favoured by the account which Luke gives of the Synod which sat at Jerusalem. First we read that certain *Pharisees*, began to dispute upon the point in controversy<sup>c</sup>. These were, in all probability, official characters in the Church. As distinct from them, however, we read that the Apostles and Elders assembled<sup>d</sup>. When, therefore, Luke mentions the Apostles and Elders with the *whole Church*, this by no means necessarily implies, that all the converts at Jerusalem were now met, or any more than the different orders of Teachers, or office-bearers in that city. The Court perfectly corresponds to that of ancient Israel, consisting of Levites, Elders, and other Judges, whom Moses styles the *whole Congregation* \* of Israel. With whatever propriety these were so denominated, with the same propriety might the Apostles and Prophets, with the Pastors and Teachers, be styled the *whole Church* of Christ, or the whole Church at Jerusalem.

FOR all the Christians at Jerusalem, with such as might come from other parts of Judea, to meet in one assembly, for the transaction of business, was manifestly impossible. As their number was great, before the persecution on the death of Stephen, so since that time it had greatly increased. For a long time the Churches had rest throughout all Judea and Samaria and Galilee; and though this peace was so far interrupted by the martyrdom of one Apostle, and the imprisonment of another, yet the word of God grew and multiplied<sup>e</sup>. Luke, indeed, speaks of a multitude being present on this occasion. "The whole multitude," says he, "were silent, &c<sup>f</sup>." But, as has been shewn, that term is applied

<sup>c</sup> Acts xv. 5.    <sup>d</sup> Acts xv. 6.    <sup>e</sup> Acts ix. 31, and xii. 24.    <sup>f</sup> Acts xv. 12.

\* This term is frequently, in the Old Testament, applied to the Public Teachers and Rulers of Israel. Deut. xxviii. 30. Josh. xx. 6. 2 Chron. xxix. 20—23.



in Scripture, to a less numerous company than that here assembled; while the very idea of their saying any thing in addition to the speech of an Apostle, shews that the Historian has persons in view, who possessed some similarity of office and of endowments. \*

THERE then appears nothing in the nature of this assembly, which authorizes all Christians to claim a share in the Government of the Church. None can be clearly traced as present, but persons who were, in all probability, Ministers of the Church. At the same time it is worthy of notice, that though all concurred with the decrees which were now passed, yet it was the voice of the Apostles and Elders which gave these authority as the will of the Holy Spirit<sup>s</sup>; in which light they were announced to the Churches<sup>h</sup>. There is therefore no authority given to ordinary Pastors, to propose any new point of faith or practice. But they ought to explain those Doctrines which have been already revealed, and to govern the Church agreeably to the spirit of those laws, which have been already given.

<sup>s</sup> Acts xvi. 4.

<sup>h</sup> Acts xv. 28.

\* Our Bible seems to speak of the whole Christians at Jerusalem, meeting together at a time when their numbers were still greater. Acts xxi. 22. "The multitude must needs come together." But these words should be rendered "A multitude," and probably refers to the public office-bearers of the Church, some of whom received Paul on his coming to the city. They are mentioned as distinct from the Apostles and Elders, "And when we were come to Jerusalem the brethren received us gladly. And the day following, Paul went into James; and all the Elders were present. And having saluted them, &c." The Historian speaks, as if Paul had not formerly met with them. Not being an Apostle to the Jews, Paul would naturally, on coming to the city, associate with the ordinary Pastors. The same he seems to have done at another time. Acts xv. 4. Once, indeed, he acted differently, Gal. ii. 2. But his great design in that journey to Jerusalem, was to assert his own Apostolic authority.

THE part which Paul acted, on the occasion mentioned above, merits consideration. It is what will shew the modesty which distinguished that eminent Minister of Christ, as well as that spirit of order which ought to prevail in the Church.

CALLED to the Ministry of the Gospel, immediately by Christ himself, Paul received the rite of Ordination from the hands of Ananias; but he did not think it necessary to go for instructions to the Apostles at Jerusalem. It is remarkable, however, that as long as his Ministry was found necessary in Judea, or its neighbourhood, he scarcely seems to claim the full powers of an Apostle. He received a mission to Cilicia from the brethren at Cæsarea<sup>a</sup>; and he delivered to his converts the decrees of the Apostles and Elders. In Churches, which he himself afterwards planted, he acted a part somewhat different: When certain Jewish Teachers wished to persuade the Galatians to submit to the ceremonial Law, he does not refute the error of those men by the decrees of their own Apostles and Elders; but he asserts his own Apostolic authority, as far as respected the Gentile Churches.

HAVING mentioned one visit to Jerusalem, which took place after his conversion, he gives a particular account of another, in order to prove the power which belonged to him as an Apostle<sup>b</sup>. "Then fourteen years after (about eighteen years after the ascension of Christ) I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also. And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that Gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, (but privately to them who were of reputation) lest I should run or had run in vain—But they who seemed to be somewhat, in conference added nothing to me—And when James

<sup>a</sup> Acts ix. 30:

<sup>b</sup> Gal. ii. 1—10.

and Cephas and John, who seemed to be (were esteemed) pillars, perceived the grace which was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas, the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the Heathen, and they unto the circumcision. Only that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do."

It has generally been thought, that those words refer to that time when Paul and Barnabas, with others, were sent from Antioch to the Apostles and Elders at Jerusalem. But it is every way more probable, that they refer to his journey to Jerusalem, after having first visited Greece, and planted a variety of Churches in different places. Though Luke is by no means circumstantial, in the account which he gives of this journey, yet what he says perfectly accords with the words of Paul\*.

As Paul, after parting with Barnabas, shewed more fully than formerly, the authority which he had to plant Churches, so that would naturally give offence to the Jewish Christians. Paul, however, while he exercised the authority that was given him, would be equally desirous to prevent that misunderstanding, which might have done prejudice to his Ministry. "He went up by revelation, lest by any means he had run

\* Nothing was more natural for Paul, than to search for Barnabas on his way to Jerusalem, and to go with him to that city, in token of their reconciliation. As Barnabas, on their parting, had gone to Cyprus, so that island lay in Paul's way to Jerusalem; for he went thither by sea, Acts xviii. 21. It is probable, that those two Apostles, with Titus, went in company, from Jerusalem to Antioch—that they traversed Galatia and Phrygia—and, that while Paul came to Ephesus, Barnabas and Titus turned aside to Colosse and other inland places. Certain it is, that about two years after coming to Ephesus, Paul mentions both Barnabas and Titus; the latter of whom he expressly speaks of, as employed in those quarters, 1 Cor. ix. 6. 2 Cor. xii. 18. —When afterwards writing to the Colossians, Paul speaks of Barnabas as well known to them, chap. iv. 10.



or should run in vain." This accords with that urgency which he discovers when passing through Ephesus, "I must by all means keep this feast that cometh at Jerufalem<sup>c</sup>."

BUT what is most worthy of attention, is the conduct which Paul discovered when come to Jerufalem. In order to preserve that spirit of union, which ought to prevail in sister Churches, he gives an account of his Ministry to the Apostles, who still possessed a pre-eminence over others. As those, however, give him no new authority, with respect to the Heathen, so Paul claims none with respect to the Hebrews. They only request him to remember the poor. By these, we are naturally led to understand, the poor saints at Jerufalem, for whom, on his return from that city, Paul made a contribution in the Gentile Churches<sup>d</sup>.

THUS was Paul acknowledged as the Apostle of the Gentiles. According, therefore, to the grace which was given him, he settles the constitution of their Churches, and he employs a set of Evangelists distinct from those employed in Judea. He does not, however, interfere with the Government of the latter. Only when he occasionally visited them, he preached to them the word. The same was done by others, in those Churches of which he had the oversight. At this Paul shews no displeasure. On the contrary while imprisoned himself at Rome, he rejoices that the Gospel was preached by other brethren, though some of them envied his success<sup>e</sup>. But when they began to sow division, he warned the brethren against them; and he even pronounced a sentence of excommunication, against some who disturbed the peace of the Galatian Churches<sup>f</sup>. There is no evidence, however, that those were Lay-Preachers: they seem rather

<sup>c</sup> Acts xviii. 21.

<sup>d</sup> 1 Cor. xvi. 1.

<sup>e</sup> Philip. i. 14. 15.

<sup>f</sup> Gal. i. 9.

to have been Evangelists or Teachers, some of whom abused the authority which they had received \*.

As long as Apostles and Evangelists remained in the Church, they, no doubt, possessed an authority over every ordinary Pastor. The latter, however, we find perform the highest acts of Government, even in the times of the Apostles. This, however, they are said to do in their *collective* capacity. As Paul and Barnabas were recommended to the grace of God, by the Prophets and Teachers at Antioch, so Timothy was ordained to the Ministry, by the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery. However numerous the converts were at Ephesus, they are all said to form one flock of which the Elders had the oversight <sup>g</sup>. Towards the end of the first century, they are also spoken of as one Church, of which a certain person, probably the senior Pastor, had in a peculiar manner the direction <sup>h</sup>.

EVEN men of the highest gifts, are said to act in concert with one another. This is most remarkable in the Church

<sup>g</sup> Acts xx. 28.

<sup>h</sup> Rev. ii. 1.

\* The Government established by Paul, in the Churches which he planted, might be supposed to resemble that which prevailed in the Jewish Synagogues, which were among the Gentiles. Only whereas the care of the poor did in the latter belong to the Scribes, it was given to other Ministers in the former. The scarcity of persons, who were qualified to take upon them the Ministry of the word, would render this necessary. Indeed, several circumstances in the Government of the Church, seem to have sprung out of the necessity of the times. At the same time, there is a kind of *ministration* mentioned by Paul as different from the distribution of charity, "He who *minist*ereth, let him wait on his ministry—He who *givet*h, let him do it with simplicity—He who *showeth* mercy, with cheerfulness." The last two duties are understood to refer, the one to the care of the poor, the other to the visitation of the afflicted. Both are said to belong to a public office, "Having *gifts* differing to the *grace* that is given to us, &c." Rom xii. 6—8. The word *gift*, as distinguished from *grace*, certainly means an *office*, for the discharge of which the latter is understood to qualify.

at Jerusalem. There we find not only a Presbytery of Apostles, but a Presbytery of Apostles and Elders. In this they followed out that spirit of association, which pervades every part of the Mosaic Government, and which, indeed, is ingrafted in the nature of man. Had the Apostles wished their successors in the Ministry, to follow a different course, they certainly would have set before them an opposite example. They would have, on every occasion, distributed themselves among the different congregations in Jerusalem, that they might more easily procure the assent of the people to that which was done. But so far from this, they meet in one assembly, where the great body of the people could neither attend, nor concur in that which was transacted.

We cannot think, that a court of any fixed number of persons, was designed to continue in the Christian Church, as it did in the Jewish. Nothing, however, can be more consonant to the spirit of Scripture, than that those invested with a public office, do, from time to time, commission their wiser brethren, to meet with those from other churches, in order to deliberate on that which may concern their common interests. This is certain, that as no man should take upon him a public office, without a regular call to it, so never is any Community at large, said to rule one another. On the contrary, Christians are commanded to be subject to certain individuals, who have the rule over them. The design of all Government is to promote good order, and to maintain a sense of duty among men. But never can those ends be gained, where every ignorant or factious person may, under a form of law, promote their own ambitious designs; or where those styled Rulers do, in fact, possess no more real authority, than the meanest of the people.



## CONCLUSION.

I HAVE now set before the reader, my sentiments upon a subject which seemed to me important. The sum of the whole is, that as no man, in the times of the Apostles, publicly taught, without a special commission from the Office-bearers of the Church, so, since the time of Moses, there has been an order of men set apart for the public instruction of mankind, and regularly educated for that office. In the New Testament, especially, every part of public service, is said to belong to official characters. He who *exhorteth* is to wait on exhortation, as well as he who teacheth on teaching. The former, indeed, when mentioned as a public work, seems to denote the highest part of Ministerial duty. When, therefore, in any of the writings of the Apostles, Christians are said to admonish one another, it either means that Pastors perform this duty to their *fellow Christians*, or it refers to that private encouragement in the way of righteousness, which all who fear God may, mutually, communicate to one another.

THE duty of both Pastors and people having been fully ascertained, in the times of the Apostles, these in their writings often pass from the one to the other, without thinking it necessary to give notice of it. The same is done in many parts of the Old Testament. From this, however, we are not to infer, that no official distinction subsists betwixt the weakest Christians, and the persons appointed to instruct them. On the same principle we might maintain, that the Rulers of ancient Israel possessed no real or permanent authority over the people: for Moses often inculcates upon the

former their duty, without *saying* that they are Rulers, whom he has in view<sup>a</sup>.

As the office of a Public Teacher is sacred, so the qualifications necessary for the discharge of it we have seen to be many. They are much superior to what men, who follow their secular employment, can be generally supposed to acquire. Every man who takes upon him that office, pledges himself to defend the cause of Christ, against every effort of its enemies. To him the flock have a right to look up for direction and counsel in every case of difficulty. To a steady attachment to Christianity, therefore, he should add that thorough knowledge of its doctrines, which may rise superior to every prejudice of education. Were the Apostolic rule only attended to, even those who have devoted many years to the study of the Scriptures, might find abundant reason to question their sufficiency for the work of the Ministry.

I do not know how far the doctrine of Lay-Preaching, in the full sense of that word, may be followed out by any party which has arisen in this country. Men will often hold in theory, what they find it impossible, or inexpedient, to reduce to practice. While, therefore, they give it out, as the right of all Christians, to preach the Gospel, they may, consistently enough, require a degree of preparation, in those whom they, as a Society, particularly support in the exercise of that right. At the same time, it is clear as noon-day, that any system which holds forth a slight preparation as necessary for the Ministry, tends to degrade that office in the eyes of mankind; and is likely in the end to terminate in another system, in which any few individuals may erect themselves into a Church, and mutually administer the ordinances of the Gospel to one another.

<sup>a</sup> Num. xxiv. 31—34.

HOWEVER careful those men may be in the admission of members, opinions which some of them have propagated, can scarcely fail to unite with the innovating spirit of the age. Men naturally transfer into Religion, those opinions which they entertain upon Politics. It is scarcely to be supposed, that any who thought themselves wise enough to direct the helm of the nation, will continue to bear the restraints which Presbyteries, amongst our most popular classes of Dissenters, are in use to lay upon them. Retaining still a form of piety, they will, therefore, grasp at a system so congenial with their ideas upon another subject. Even, therefore, where the authority of the Parent Society does not at all extend its opinions may have their influence; and may there foster a spirit of faction, detrimental to the peace of every Christian Society, and dangerous to the best interests of these lands.

THE mischiefs arising from the doctrine of Lay-Preaching, in a religious point of view, have been well described by the Rev. Dr. Jamieson, in his Remarks on the Rev. Rowland Hill's Journal. According to that respectable writer, it tends to support a perpetual revolutionary Government in the Church. I may farther assert, that it has a tendency altogether to overturn the office of a Public Teacher. If every Christian has a *right* to preach the Gospel, he has an *equal right* to dispense every ordinance of Christianity. Thus it is only for want of an auditory, that the lowest of the people, do not become priests of the high places. But though none should submit to their Ministry, yet who can prevent their exercising it to their own families? Can any man question their *right*, with respect to those over whom God has given them a natural authority. Thus we have restored, what the proud Sceptic has long wished to see, the Patriarchal age! in which every man does what is right in his own eyes; and, without the controul of any other, acts as



priest and prophet of his own family. Were not the simplicity of the Patriarchal age now lost, we might hope, that the plainer principles of the Gospel would continue for a time to operate. But from the present temper of men, we have much reason to fear, that infidelity would grow apace; till Christianity at last retired, and left her unnatural children in the darkness of error and of superstition. Surely the Infidels of the day cannot, without surprise, behold religious men aim at that very end, which, by craft or argument, they have been unable to accomplish; and can scarcely fail to applaud a system, which, for the present, they deride as weak and enthusiastic.

IN the present fluctuating state of public opinion, as at all times, it becomes the friends of Jesus, to consider the nature and tendency of the measures which they adopt. By promoting unscriptural ideas, even in matters which they deem circumstantial, they may give a bias to public opinion, which may extend its influence to many generations. Let the Ministers of the Gospel, in particular, endeavour to feed their flocks with sound knowledge and understanding. Let them consider that on the part which they act, under the Divine blessing, depends the prosperity of their people. "God gave some Apostles, some Prophets, some Evangelists, some Pastors and Teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine."

OBEDIENT to all lawful authority, let every man study to correct the errors of his own conduct; and, in the station in which God has placed him, to promote the interests of true Religion. Pray for the peace of the Church of God, and for the welfare of the nation to which you belong. "Stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths,

where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls."

MAY God himself, with whom is the residue of the Spirit, shed down of the benign influence of the same upon all the Churches. May he bless the precious seed of the word, wherever it is already sown. May he, in the course of his Providence, open a way for its introduction into every land. May he clothe his Ministers with salvation, that his saints may shout for joyfulness. Thus shall glory have with us a permanent habitation. Truth shall spring up from the earth, and Righteousness embrace her from on high.



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